

DUNETHVIN;

OR,

THE VISIT TO PARIS.

A Novel.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY A LADY,

SOME TIME RESIDENT IN FRANCE.



Her women insolent and self-caress'd,
By Vanity's unwearied finger dress'd,
Forgot the blush that virgin fears impart
To modest checks, and borrow'd one from art;
Were just such trifles, without worth or use,
As silly pride and idleness produce;
Curl'd, scented, furbelow'd, and flouned around,
With feet too delicate to touch the ground;
They stretch'd the neck and roll'd the wanton eye,
And sigh'd for ev'ry fool that flutter'd by. COWPER.

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DUNETHVIN.

CHAPTER I.

THE first morning that Annie came unattended by Victoire, Cecilia took the opportunity to tell her cousin, in the most cautious and tender manner, the real character of Bironville; Mrs. Tremayne likewise assured her of the truth of all she had heard, and related the particulars of his conduct, as her son had before done to herself and his uncle: she did not scruple to do this, now the count had left Dinan; she was again, she said, at peace, but while he staid, she never could have been happy; knowing the deliberate vil-

lany of De Bironville, she trembled for the safety of Edward—he might even attempt to assassinate him, so deep was his malice against her son.

Annie, struck with horror at the recital of such unheard-of baseness and duplicity, readily promised to renounce all idea of him as a lover; still she was firmly persuaded that lady Harrict and Victoire knew nothing of his despicable conduct whilst in Spain—it was not possible they could still believe him to be so faultless, so amiable as they had always described him to her. She then told Cecilia all that had been urged in the favour of Eugene, and against Annandale: the virtues and excellent disposition of the latter were now powerfully contrasted in the mind of Annie with the vices of the count de Bironville; her former love for him in part returned, and with tears of bitter repentance, she lamented her folly in having suffered herself to be prejudiced against him; to have wronged him even in thought was now agony to her susceptible heart;

she had even been prevailed on to renounce him, and prefer another, who was not worthy to be called his rival. Could she endure to meet Annandale again?—would not the reproaches of her conscience overwhelm her with the remembrance of her falsehood? It was true, she had not encouraged the count to believe she accepted his ardent professions of love, but she had received his attentions and listened to his praises, which might fairly by him be considered as favourable to his views. In heart she was self-condemned, for had she not endeavoured to banish Annandale from her memory? She had preferred the adulatory homage of De Bironville to the more refined and delicate professions of love from Annandale—she had indeed been most capricious, most faithless. Could he ever forgive this injury? would he, if all were known to him, still love and esteem her? She could not practise deceit, and let him imagine she had remained constant, unchanged in her sentiments: if

they should ever meet again, his attentions and undeviating affection would wound her with the keenest ~~stab~~ of self-reproach. To Cecilia all her griefs were made known, and from her she sought advice to direct her future conduct.

Annie till now had never experienced the anguish of remorse, for injustice and cruelty towards a fellow-being; to one, too, whom she had engaged herself to love, and who had an undeniable claim to her esteem. Like her erring father, Annie was endowed with the keenest sensibility, with all his warmth and impetuosity of feelings; easily led away by the artful and hypocritical, with the best disposition, wanting only stability of character to make her one of the most perfect of human beings, as she really was, her fate through life entirely depended on those she associated with: while at Dunethvin, under the care of the worthy Mrs. Berwick, and the good and benevolent sir Ronald, she was the lovely unsophisticated girl, refined and elegant in person and manners, but

modest, delicate, and unconscious of her superiority in beauty—compassionate and generous, she was idolized by the dependents at the castle, and the families of their neighbouring poor; though even then thoughtless and giddy to the extreme, yet was her heart the seat of virtue and goodness—she delighted to sooth and comfort the afflicted sir Ronald—she would study the happiness of the lowest menial, and relieve their sufferings of poverty and sickness by every means she had in her power; often had she listened to the tale of misery, and with unsparing liberality bestowed all the little allowance of money she received as a child, to purchase comforts for the poor and destitute.

Had she continued at Dunethvin, the sweet engaging simplicity of innocence would have remained unchanged by the illusions of vanity, of pomp, and ostentatious display—her heart untainted by vice, and her mind uncorrupted by the seductive voice of flattery, of the most fulsome adulation, which now so constantly assailed

her, exposed without one friend to warn her of her danger, had not Mr. Hamilton and his daughter come purposely to save her from becoming the restless prey of lady Harriet and her vile colleagues, who, to gratify the pride of that abandoned woman, brought her into notice in the circles of the highest *ton* in Paris, while the fortune of Annie, it was agreed, should remunerate them for their *friendly* services to her ladyship, who, to gain fashion and notoriety, consented to sacrifice to base and mercenary views the only and darling child of him who already had lost himself in the estimation of the world through her insidious arts—of him to whom at the altar she had sworn love and obedience. But lady Harriet had before broken the same solemn engagement to his injured predecessor; how then could colonel Campbell hope that she would be more strict in the observance of her duty to him, than she had to the deceived sir Herbert Walsingham? She who had set in open defiance her own will against the bonds of

religion, virtue, and grateful affection, such as lady Harriet owed her much-wronged husband, could not be again confided in with even a probability of happiness and security in the integrity of her conduct; and yet colonel Campbell had madly placed unbounded confidence in lady Harriet—he had for her risked his own domestic peace, and left the welfare of his lovely innocent girl in the power of this deceptive siren, who had succeeded in blinding him against her real character, and bound him in bonds of affection and admiration which nothing could impair. Spite of all that he knew of her real conduct, and the detestation she was held in by his own family, still he fondly sought every means to exculpate to himself her former errors, and believed her love for him unfeigned and unbounded. For his sake, he thought she loved the artless child of his former wife, and studied to please him as her husband, by indulging and consulting every wish of his beloved

Annie—she could have no other motive but their mutual happiness.

It was thus that colonel Campbell had reasoned when he allowed his daughter to go into public with lady Harriet, during their stay at Paris; from his dependence on her love for himself and child, he suspected not the mercenary intentions of the Bironvilles, much less that his wife was an accomplice in their schemes, and was with them preparing the mind of Annie for future lessons of duplicity and disobedience to him.

Annie, in her last-mentioned visit to her cousin, became convinced of the folly and injustice of her late conduct; she lamented deeply the erroneous judgment she had passed on the interference and friendly advice of lady Annandale, and the cruel ingratitude with which she had acted towards her son, who had, she doubted no longer, been more constant, more sincere in his affection than she had to him—he yet remained unchanged in his opinion of her; but how fickle, how very trifling had

she proved herself, that in so short a space of time she could have been persuaded to banish him from her heart, and receive the attentions of another? She sighed as she reflected that she was no longer worthy of Annandale: lady Annandale's suspicions of her real disposition were but too just—her instability of character was proved beyond a doubt, and this had been the only objection the mother of her lover had raised against their immediate union.

"Is it likely," thought Annie, "that if she knew the opinion I have been taught to form of her and lord Annandale, that she would again sanction with her consent our reconciliation? or if she were to overlook the ingratitude of my conduct, can she again place any dependence on my professions of amendment—of following the admonitions she has bestowed on one so unworthy of her kindness and solicitude?"

Cecilia and her aunt commiserated the distress of their little favourite, and tried every means to sooth her agitated spirits, assisted her with their advice, and trusted

that her present affliction, however painful to endure, would eventually prove for her good by opening her eyes to the evils that surrounded her: to strengthen her in the good, resolutions she had determined to adopt, they mentioned the probability of lord Annandale's arrival in France; they had indeed received a letter that very morning from sir Ronald, which informed them he was soon to be expected on the continent.

On the return of his lordship to Edinburgh, he was at first greatly distressed at the absence of Annie, and still more so when he heard she was at Paris, and with lady Harriet; he had wished immediately to follow her, but this he was dissuaded from, by the assurance that she was to be absent but one month, which was nearly then expired; but he had resolved, should any thing occur at the expiration of that time to detain her, he would immediately set out for Paris.

Doctor Ellerslie, his former tutor, had agreed to accompany him, at his and lady Annandale's request: he was a most wor-

thy character, fondly attached to his young friend, whose education he had for many years had the entire superintendence of, according to the wish of the late lord Annandale, father to the present young nobleman just mentioned.

Doctor Ellerslie was chaplain in the family, and spent his time in literary pursuits and domestic retirement; this he preferred to the more busy avocations in life, and had refused every offer of preferment rather than resign his present situation: he was the friend and adviser of lady Annandale and her son, who treated the worthy doctor with every mark of esteem and respect; though rather reserved to strangers, there was a benevolence and urbanity of manner throughout his whole deportment, that pleased even the most fastidious observer. Anxious for the happiness of his pupil, he was the most strenuous adviser that he should not be too hasty in regard to his intended engagement with Annie Campbell. Doctor Ellerslie had coolly scrutinized her disposition; it was, he al-

lowed, excellent, but her character was too changeable to be yet relied on ; he saw with the eyes of a critic unbiassed in judgment, while his youthful friend, viewing her with the fond partiality of a devoted lover, perceived only her perfections—affection made him blind to her follies ; he would urge in her behalf to his mother, that the vivacity of his charming mistress ill suited the sedate manners of the doctor—a man of learning as he was, and but little versed in the gaieties of life, he made not sufficient allowance for the youth and inexperience of his lovely enchanting Annie.

So reasoned the warm impassioned lover; but doctor Ellerslie's judgment was notwithstanding perfectly correct ; he had not been misled by prejudice, but, on the contrary, made every allowance for the faults of the fair object of his pupil's affection ; he was too compassionate to the failings of human nature to be a harsh unfeeling judge : he was, besides, extremely partial to Annie ; he had known her excel-

gent mother—her unprotected helpless infancy he had pitied, bereft as she had been of the care and admonitions of maternal love.

His friend, the good sir Ronald, had, by engaging Mrs. Berwick to take the care of his little granddaughter, done all in his power to supply the place of her deceased parent; but his own excessive indulgence had in part counteracted the more prudent measures of his coadjutor in the education of Annie. Ellerslie had mildly remonstrated against this mistaken tenderness; but when he beheld the winning graces of the lovely child, he could in part excuse the fond idolatry of the grandfather, and his own generous heart felt interested for the future happiness of Annie Campbell.

It was with unfeigned grief he deplored, with lady Annandale, the injury her manners would now probably sustain under the guidance of lady Harriet; he regretted that she had been allowed to go with her to Paris, and when his pupil mentioned his determination to go to France, he readily

promised to accompany him; he could not be surprised at the affection which Annandale felt for Annie Campbell, engaging and captivating as even he was willing to allow her to be, nor could he blame the anxiety of the lover, which induced him to follow her to Paris.

Sir Ronald was highly gratified with their solicitude for the happiness of his darling girl; it convinced him how dear she was to the man who was one day to become her husband, which happy period the worthy old man looked forward to with delight, as it would not deprive him of her company entirely, and add to her happiness so materially: it had been determined that she should reside in Scotland, and the estates of lord Annandale were not very distant from those of Dunethvin. Sir Ronald, in the absence of Annie, frequently amused himself in forming plans for the future, in which she and Annandale were the principal objects. Vain hope! We plan and propose visionary schemes; while the future is veiled in dark-

ness, we illumine it with fairy prospects of bliss, never perhaps to be realized; for true it is, "we know not what a day may bring forth." And well may we exclaim with the poet—"Oh, blindness to the future kindly given!" Life is one varied path of good and ill, but we are guided through it by the hand of an all-merciful, all-powerful Creator.

After sir Ronald had given a reluctant consent to Annie's wish of prolonging her visit, he dispatched a messenger to Edinburgh, to inform lord Annandale of the promise that had been extorted from him; he said that nothing but the consideration of her safety could have induced him to grant his consent.

Lady Annandale easily perceived that lady Harriet had used this plea to detain her visitor—there was no more real danger then, than when Annie left England. She did not attempt opposing her son's and the doctor's departure, for she began to suspect some plans might be laid to ensnare Annie: her large fortune was well

known to lady Harriet, and this might induce her ladyship to keep her young friend under her own guidance, merely to aid her schemes of aggrandizement, now that Annie was so near coming into possession of her property.

Annie heard with surprise the intention of lord Annandale to visit France, which her grandfather evidently approved: the kindness of sir Ronald in his manner of mentioning her, his recommending her to the regard of Cecilia and her father, pleased, yet pained our youthful heroine, for while it convinced her of his love, it reproached her for having left him so much longer than had been at first intended.

On the following day, as lady Harriet and Victoire were engaged in planning new decorations for a ball to be given in a few days at the house of colonel Campbell, Annie stole away unperceived, and spent the morning with Cecilia, who was now her only comforter and friendly adviser. She appeared thoughtful, which with her was a most unusual circumstance; she told

her cousin she had been much rallied on her woe-begone looks—that Victoire had jestingly attributed her melancholy to the absence of the count, her brother; Annie said, she had vainly protested to the contrary—they still persisted in the belief, or pretended to think, she regretted his departure.

To amuse her cousin, Cecilia proposed a little music, and begged her to take the guitar monsieur le Tour had had new-strung for her, and she would try one of the Spanish ballads Edward had brought her.

Annie gave it as her opinion, that the instrument was now very tolerable. She played and sung several airs with her usual skill.—“I think we had better send for my harp, Cecilia,” said she; “it is a very beautiful one; my father bought it for me in Paris—I know it to be a most sweet-toned instrument; do let me send for it—I wish I could see one of our servants pass this way, I would order them to bring it directly—I long for you to try it.”

"No, you had better not," replied Cecilia, "it might get injured in bringing; perhaps your father or lady Harriet may not like to have it brought: I really think you had better not send for it, my dear Annie; it is, you know, such a very expensive one, I should be sorry to have it injured."

"Nonsense! nonsense! as if the thing were made only to be set up to look at! Even if it should be spoiled, what signifies? I should soon have another; however expensive it may be, my father would not dream of being displeased with me, though he might indeed be in a little bit of a rage with the clumsy French servants for their awkwardness; I should for that have to give them a *douceur* of a crown or so, and then all would be well again; they would not mind the scolding when they had the money: I often make them such presents, when by my wild frolics they get into disgrace with papa. The other evening poor Jervis got it sadly for not finding me in the house, when I was at the same time out of it far

enough, only I pretended to the contrary; when they all came home from searching the whole town over for me, you would have laughed to have seen their amazement."

She then, in the drollest manner, related all that passed the first evening of her arrival at Dinan, the particulars of which Cecilia had never before heard; she could not help joining in the laugh, and Annie had completely resumed her usual good spirits, for sorrow could not long remain an inmate in her bosom, the abode of peace and contentment.

Early in the afternoon, as the cousins were both standing near the window, an English carriage passed slowly up the street.—“Some family from our own dear country, I should imagine,” said Cecilia, as it approached the house; “I think they are travellers, not residents, by the appearance of the equipage.”

“I should like to know who they are,” said Annie; “there are only two gentle-

men in the carriage—no ladies that I can see," said she, intently gazing that way.

A scream of amazement and terror at this moment alarmed Cecilia; she hastily turned to inquire the cause, when Annie fell senseless at her feet. Cecilia tremblingly raised the inanimate form of her cousin, and was endeavouring to bear her to a seat, when Mrs. Tremayne, having heard the scream, came to inquire what had terrified them. She instantly took Annie from the weak support of Cecilia, and inquired the meaning of this sudden alarm: her niece returned to the window to see if the carriage had passed the house, for she was convinced it had in some manner been the cause of her cousin's indisposition. As it had advanced but slowly, it was but just opposite the window at which she then stood; upon looking at it again, she perceived with surprise the arms of Annandale on the pannels; the two gentlemen Annie had seen at a distance then too great to recognize them immediately, were lord Annandale and doctor Ellerslie; it

stopped at the door of their house. Cecilia had but just time to explain this to her aunt in a few hasty words, when both gentlemen were ushered up to the apartments of Mr. Hamilton, by the simple Nanan, who had not thought it necessary to ask the ladies if she should admit the strangers—they were both English, and that was enough, she thought, to make their appearance welcome.

The door into the anti-room was open, opposite to that near which Mrs. Tremayne sat, supporting the still fainting Annie, who was but slowly returning to life and recollection, when Annandale hastily entered the room, and beheld, to his utter amazement and alarm, the dear object of his fondest love, senseless and inanimate, supported in the arms of Cecilia and her aunt. Rushing forward with all the wildness of distracted fear, he caught her in his arms, and eagerly inquired the cause of her present indisposition. Mrs. Tremayne explained, as well as she could judge, what had caused her sudden and violent emotion.

Annandale at this accused himself for thoughtless impetuosity, in thus intruding on his beloved Annie without any previous notice; the surprise and joy occasioned by his unexpected arrival had, he doubted not, caused her present illness. Deaf to the friendly voice of Ellerslie, he gazed in silent anguish on the pallid features of his adored Annie, as her lovely face reclined unconsciously on his throbbing bosom. Unbroken was the dead silence that prevailed while he waited in breathless suspense some symptom of returning life; all bent anxiously over the fair sufferer, to watch the look of animation that gradually brightened her countenance; the delicate bloom of health again mantled over the beautiful cheek, and deepened the rosy hue of her lips; her soft blue eyes again beamed with intelligence; she fixed a steady look of inquiry on her lover, gazed at him for some moments with a bewildered expression of doubt and fear, then raising her head from his shoulder that had supported her, uttered a wild and

piercing shriek ; she evidently wished to hide herself from his scrutinizing glance, and faintly exclaimed—“ Go, Annandale—dear generous Annandale—I cannot, must not see you.”

Her voice faltered, and she again sunk into a state of insensibility.

“ Not see me !” exclaimed Annandale, breathless with astonishment ; “ not see me ! and who shall dare to keep her from me ? This is all the work of that detested accursed woman, lady Harriet ; but her diabolical plans shall not succeed—I have the sanction of sir Ronald and of colonel Campbell to visit her as my betrothed wife, and I defy the malice of that woman to part us ! Annie is—shall be my own.”

Cecilia joined in her endeavours to assist doctor Ellerslie in calming the perturbed feelings of Annandale : his frantic energy alarmed them ; too agitated himself to support his lovely burden, he reluctantly resigned her to the care of Mrs. Tre-mayne and her niece, whose compassionate heart commiserated the sufferings of

Annie, and her noble generous Annandale; she well knew the cause of her cousin's reluctance to meet her lover, but delicacy forbade her betraying the secret of Annie—she was unwilling to inform him of her acquaintance with Bironville, and the promise Annie had given lady Harriet not to consider herself engaged to his rival, as her ladyship styled Annandale.

Annandale continued to pace the apartment with deep and agonizing grief, but at length he yielded to the entreaties of the worthy doctor, and consented to leave the senseless Annie for a time, and retire with him to the anti-room, there to wait her recovery, which the sight of him might again retard.

The kind and tender care of Mrs. Tremayne and Cecilia was successful; Annie again became conscious of surrounding objects, and gently pressing the hand of her cousin, thanked her, in feeble broken accents, for her affectionate assiduity.—“Do my senses deceive me—or did I really behold Annandale just now? Has he

indeed been here? Tell me, I entreat you, my dear Cecilia?"

"Compose yourself, my love," replied her amiable companion—"you suffer your feelings to be too soon agitated; be calm, and I will tell you all. Annandale has been here with doctor Ellerslie; he wishes to see you again when you are quite recovered, but observing how much his presence distressed you, his friend insisted on his leaving us a short time, to recover from your surprise at their unwelcome intrusion: when you are able, my dear girl, to see lord Annandale, we are to let him know. It pained me to the heart to see the deep disappointment and distress of that excellent young man."

"I can never have the courage to receive him as I ought," said Annie, mournfully, "for I must tell him all my injustice, all my falsehood to him, and the opinion lady Harriet gave me respecting him and his dear good mother. How could I be so cruel, so base, as to listen to such sen-

timents against those who have treated me with the sincerest affection? Can he again love and esteem me, after such ingratitude to lady Annandale and himself? Oh no, Cecilia! he cannot forgive this conduct, this ungenerous return to the best of friends, the best of parents," said she, while the tears of sincere repentance bathed her cheeks, and the deep sigh of contrite sorrow heaved her throbbing bosom. Clasping her hands, and at the same time raising her mild blue eyes with a look of imploring earnestness, she again appealed to her cousin—"Cecilia, do you think he can or ought to forgive me?"

Annandale could bear no more, no longer listen to the remonstrances of Ellerslie, but deaf to every other voice but that of the afflicted Annie, whose imploring accents yet vibrated to his very soul, he darted forward, and throwing himself at her feet, besought her in the tenderest manner to listen to his professions of unabated love—for his sake, if she yet loved him, to spare her self-reproaches, nor plunge

him into misery by again witnessing her sufferings; he knew and had feared the arts that would be practised by her false friends to influence her against himself and his mother—young and innocent herself, he said, how could his sweet maid suspect deceit, of which she had no idea? He pardoned all her doubts of his truth, and still loved her with the fondest and most devoted attachment. “By this dear hand I swear, that my future hope of happiness in this world depends on your love, dear enchanting Annie,” added he, imprinting an ardent kiss on the fair hand, his not unwilling prisoner.

The voice of love, of kindness, was not heard in vain—Annie became more composed, and gradually recovered her former serenity of mind. The good doctor behaved with his usual benevolence, and congratulated both parties on this happy, though at first ill-omened, meeting; and thinking his company could now well be dispensed with by the youthful lovers, he:

observed that he much wished to see Mr. Hamilton; and inquiring which way he was likely to meet him and Mr. Tre-mayne, proposed proceeding in the carriage toward Chêne Feron, as Cecilia had told him they were gone to see the chateau. He good-naturedly observed, that he made no doubt he should find them; and addressing lord Annandale, said jocosely—“ I need not ask you to accompany me, I suppose, my lord? you will not find time hang heavy till my return.” And bowing to the ladies, he took leave.

Annie, reassured by the respectful love of Annandale, could now answer his numerous inquiries respecting her opinion of lady Harriet, of Paris, and many other questions on indifferent subjects. Unwilling, yet wishing to ask an explanation of what had been urged against himself and lady Annandale—if he had yet to fear a rival in the affections of his beloved girl—anxiety and a fear of distressing her yet agitated his mind; but with unmixed joy he heard her determination to leave

France as early as possible the ensuing spring. She declared she would on no account be prevailed on to prolong her stay, whatever lady Harriet might urge to induce her compliance to her requests.

" You will then return to Duncthvin, my charming wanderer?" said Annandale with delight, his eyes sparkling with joy as he contemplated the smiling countenance of Annie. " My mother intends visiting Paris for a few weeks in the spring; I hope you will do her the honour to place yourself under her care on your return home; for I think it likely lady Harriet will not be very anxious to take up her future residence in England—she will most probably wish to remain in France."

Annie gave her happy lover a ready assent to his proposal, and he, much gratified with this arrangement, engaged to write to lady Annandale, and inform her of it.

Mrs. Tremayne and Cecilia were scarcely less rejoiced at the plan than lord Annandale himself; they knew and highly re-

spected the worthy character of that young nobleman's mother, and, circumstanced as Annie was, she would be of all others the most proper escort to conduct her to her grandfather, sir Ronald.

It was not for some time that Mr. Hamilton and the other two gentlemen returned. Part of that time, Annie and her lover being entirely alone, an explanation on her part took place, in which she related all that had passed, and also lady Harriet's wish for her to accept Eugene de Bironville as her lover; she told what Cecilia and her aunt had informed her respecting the real character of the count.

Annandale, more than ever enraged with lady Harriet for her duplicity and art, would hear no extenuation of her conduct —no, not even from the persuasive lips of Annie; he execrated her very name, and would give no credit to the supposition that she was ignorant of the villainy of De Bironville.

Annie, still blindly attached to her treacherous friend, believed, that however un-

just her prejudices against lady Annandale and her son might be, yet such were her unfeigned sentiments; and though they were erroneous, yet imagining them herself to be just, lady Harriet had done but her duty in attempting to dissuade her from becoming the wife of lord Annandale.

But Annie vainly pleaded the cause of her supposed friend to her lover. Annandale protested that he could never believe her motive good; she was, he boldly declared, a deep designing hypocrite, and wished to sacrifice Annie to her own ambitious and mercenary views; he had not in his whole life felt such unconquerable resentment towards any human being as he did now to her. She had received him, as she did all others she meant to deceive, with all the semblance of friendship; when that very day he had called at colonel Campbell's with the letter he had brought with him as an introduction from sir Ronald, she had earnestly entreated him not to go to the hotel, but joined in her husband's request that he

would consider their house as his home during his stay at Dinan; and yet this very woman had, not many days before, basely traduced him to her whose good opinion was his dearest possession. No, he added, he could never forget such bitter malice—such deep artifice!

Mrs. Tremayne and Cecilia returned, and the conversation changed to another more congenial to the gentle forgiving nature of Annie. Mr. Hamilton, doctor Ellerslie, and Edward, at length returning from their long promenade, Annandale presented the former a packet from sir Ronald, containing letters to him and his daughter. Cecilia gladly received hers, and retired with Annie to peruse it; as they were going, Annandale, apologizing for his forgetfulness, declared he had one likewise for Annie. The good-natured reader will, no doubt, as she did, pardon his omission, in kind consideration for all his late anxiety, and afterwards the long and interesting conversation he was engaged in; not meaning the least disrespect to his

worthy old friend, he had certainly, for some cause or other, never once thought of his letter to his granddaughter.

Mr. Hamilton received lord Annandale with friendly politeness; he had already, during his walk, become acquainted with all that passed on his first introduction; he was most happy to hear of his arrival, as he now hoped that Annie would be convinced of the deceit of lady Harriet. He introduced his nephew Edward to his two visitors; and upon reading sir Ronald's letter, found that it was his particular wish to recommend lord Annandale to the notice of himself and colonel Campbell, both having been previously informed of the intended match between him and Annie, whose father had sanctioned her choice by his approbation. Though not personally acquainted with lord Annandale, colonel Campbell had received the most satisfactory account of his character and fortune from sir Ronald, with whom the young man was a great favourite.

In compliance with his request, the father of Annie had considered her as engaged to his lordship, and though he certainly was not entirely ignorant of the attentions of the count de Bironville, he never imagined it likely his child could prefer a French count to an earl, her own countryman: he saw nothing therefore to fear in what he called her “girlish flirtations with Eugene,” and took no notice of her partiality for the count.

When the lover of Annie arrived, colonel Campbell welcomed him as his future son-in-law, and wished to have sent for her from Mr. Hamilton’s, but fortunately for Annie, lord Annandale proposed going himself, as his friend and companion the doctor was extremely anxious to see his old acquaintance, and his daughter Cecilia. In vain did lady Harriet and Victoire try every art to detain him—he was too glad of an opportunity to speak to Annie un-~~served~~ by either of these ladies, to be prevailed on to give up the intention of going immediately to her “uncle’s—he per-

sisted in accompanying doctor Ellerslie; and most fortunate was it he did so, for he had by that means become acquainted with her ladyship's plans against him, before she had made Annie promise not to reveal the opinions she entertained of his lordship and his mother: they were now, he trusted, too well aware of the deception practised by lady Harriet to fear her designs against them; every particular of her conduct he related to Mr. Hamilton, that Annie had so recently informed him of, so indignant was he at her perfidy and malice.

Doctor Ellerslie, with his usual goodness of heart, joined with Mr. Hamilton in expressing his joy that all was explained to the satisfaction of the lovers, so far as to their mutual reconciliation: respecting the mean conduct of lady Harriet, as nothing could be said to excuse it, it was best to leave it to her own conscience to settle, with the long list of depravities she might there find recorded against her.

Annandale consented to take the advice

of the doctor, and treat her with the contempt she deserved, and not, as he first intended, to upbraid her in the presence of her husband with her base duplicity.

"I have often heard that lovers' quarrels are the renewal of love," said Mrs. Tremayne to lord Annandale.

"If not too often repeated," observed doctor Ellerslie; "but I must own I think it rather a dangerous experiment, and too often productive of real misery. I would not wish, my lord, that you should adopt this notion; for, believe me, whatever tends to lessen esteem, will eventually diminish love; therefore never expect pity again from me on a like occasion—I will not have a word to say on the subject; mind, I give you fair notice not to rely on any help of mine—But, happy as you now are, Annandale, you will only think me a dull prosing old fellow, who is fit for nothing but the seclusion of my library," added he, with a smile of benevolence, as he contemplated the happy countenance of his beloved pupil.

Cecilia, who participated in the renewed happiness of her cousin, was anxious to have as much of her company as possible, and engaged her to spend the following day, if she could, entirely with her. This Annie readily agreed to, and she made not any doubt of being able to do so; for as Victoire would be much engaged in the thoughts of new dresses for the parties and balls she was engaged to for several evenings, she would not be likely to regret her absence—"And lady Harriet cannot well refuse me, if papa does not," said she, "and I do not fear any denial from him, for he, you know, never contradicts me. Annandale spends the day with you, I believe? did he not accept your father's invitation to dine with him to-morrow—did he not, Cecilia?"

"Then we may thank his lordship for your company, I suppose? but I think I heard a carriage stop at our door—did you, Annie?"

"Oh yes, it must be lady Harriet's; she promised to call for me on her return from

madame le Brun's this evening.—Victoire is now speaking to the servant; they do not mean to come in, I see, said Annie, coming from the window. "I must then go and wish all the good folks good-night."

She then, with her cousin, returned to the room where they had left the rest of the party, and took leave for the night: after embracing her dear Cecilia, she tripped hastily out of the room, and was proceeding towards the staircase, when lord Annandale followed her into the anti-room, and said, in a whisper, he hoped she would not forget her engagement to be at her uncle's early the next day.

This was all the speech Cecilia heard, or *seemed* to hear—the author cannot pretend to say which; but certain it is that Annandale took the liberty again to seize the delicate little hand of Annie, and pressing it to his lips, reluctantly suffered her to take it from him.

When she had left him, Annandale placed himself at the window, that he

might from thence catch another glance at her he loved beyond all other earthly beings: he saw her light foot ascend the step of the carriage; she looked up as they drove off, and he had one more glimpse of her lovely features; still he left not his position by the window, but continued to gaze after the carriage till it was no longer visible.

"Now, my lord, pray sit down and pen a sonnet 'to your mistress's eyebrow,' in readiness to present her with on the morrow," said doctor Ellerslie. "These young lovers, Mr. Hamilton, are even worse companions than the tribe of the bookworm class, to which he says I belong. Oh, keep me ever from being in love!" continued the jocose doctor. "Young man, I hope you mean to take care of that same mischievous Cupid—if he have not already winged his dart, pray be on your guard."

Edward unconsciously turned towards Cecilia—their eyes met; and what was the language of Edward's *may be doubtful*, but her's fell abashed beneath their glance,

and the delicate hue of her cheek became, as suddenly heightened; even the snowy whiteness of her neck was slightly tinged with the mantling tint of modesty.

In the eyes of her lover she had never appeared so beautiful as at that moment; the tell-tale blush had told him that she was conscious of his love, and that Ellerslie's advice was given too late to save him from being her willing captive.

CHAPTER II.

LORD Annandale and his friend, soon after the departure of Annie, took leave of Mr. Hamilton and his family to return to the hotel, for the former was determined not to accept the offer of being at the Campbell's, great as the temptation was to be in the same house with his adored Annie; but the conduct of lady Harriet had ren-

dered it now impossible—his aversion to her was so great, that he well knew it would be with difficulty he should be able to conceal his contempt and detestation; but for the sake of her he loved, and of her father, whom he pitied, he resolved to stifle his resentment, if possible, yet to watch the artful machinations of his wife.

Mr. Hamilton expressed his regret that he could not invite him to stay with them, but their house was already so full, that Edward was under the necessity of sleeping at a neighbour's, a few doors off, in the same street; there being many strangers then at Dinan, he had found a great difficulty in securing lodgings for his own family, small as it was, as but few of the inhabitants let out their rooms ready furnished.

Lord Annandale and his friend Ellerslie determined to take up their residence at the Hotel de Commerce, for the time they should continue at Dinan. This being arranged, the two gentlemen having fixed the hour they should be in readiness to proceed to Chêne Feron on the following

day, the party at length separated, mutually pleased with each other.

"Edward, I think you will find our Scottish laird a very agreeable companion; he appears to be an exceedingly amiable young man," said Mr. Hamilton.

"I am perfectly of your opinion," replied his nephew, "and his friend doctor Ellerslie, who has known him from a child, spoke very highly of him this morning during our walk home; if you remember, he appears much attached to his pupil. I was much pleased with the worthy old doctor, though I must own he has something rather stiff and peculiar in his appearance at first sight; but he has lived probably so many years in retirement, that he has lost the ease and polish of high life, though very mild and pleasing in his address."

"He is worth a score of your *modern fine gentlemen*, in my opinion, Edward," said his uncle, not willing to hear the slightest insinuation against a person he so much esteemed; "he may be rather old-

fashioned in his appearance as to person and dress, but he is by no means precise and forbidding in his manner, when you are better acquainted with him, and his benevolent countenance is the true index of a heart warm with genuine philanthropy; meek, charitable, and compassionate, he has the disposition of a true Christian, without pretending to superior piety, for he views with the pity of an angel the errors and foibles of his fellow-mortals, but arrogates no merit to himself from having escaped their failings—he is indeed a rare instance of virtue truly exemplary; there is not a man now living I think so highly of, except my venerable friend, sir Ronald Campbell. Annandale I consider most fortunate in having had so excellent a preceptor and companion, and I am inclined to think his lordship has benefited by his worthy example and advice."

"Poor Annie," said Mrs. Tremayne, "will, I hope, be more on her guard for the future against the insinuations lady Harriet may repeat respecting lord An-

nandale. I was quite alarmed for her this afternoon, when she continued so long insensible; at first I was at a loss to guess the real cause of her fainting fit—she really is too susceptible in her feelings; sensibility to an excess is, in my opinion, a misery in itself: I fear, with such impetuous feelings, any severe unexpected misfortune may prove fatal to her; to-day her self-reproaches went to my heart—none could have heard her without being deeply interested for the dear girl; Annandale could not do otherwise than forgive her."

"He must have been more than mortal that could have resisted the pleadings of her angel voice," replied Cecilia; "I felt that I could have died to serve her: she is dearer to me than ever—I love her with all the affection of a sister; she is hasty and inconsiderate, I allow—she has never till now been checked, but her heart is the seat of every virtue that can make woman lovely," added she, with energy, forgetful that any others were present but her aunt, with whom she was conversing.

Mr. Hamilton smiled at her enthusiastic defence of her cousin.—“ I have frequently told Cecilia she would make an excellent pleader—what do you think, Edward?” said he.

“ I should desire no better counsel—one so warm an advocate must gain the cause, for he must be more than mortal that could resist the pleadings of her angel voice,” he replied, repeating the words she had used in speaking of ‘annie, and which, lover-like, he thought even more applicable to herself. “ Your cousin intends going with us to-morrow, I hope?” continued he, addressing Cecilia, and purposely changing the subject of conversation for a topic more general, as he perceived her embarrassment arose from a consciousness of having probably spoken too earnestly in the defence of her cousin.

“ She promised me she would be here at an early hour,” said Cecilia, “ and continue the whole day with us; but I hope she will come unattended by Victoire de Bironville. I fear it may be unjust to take such a sudden aversion to any individual,

but I quite dislike that girl; she is, I am convinced, a spy sent by lady Harriet to watch my dear Annie."

" Oh, leave her to me, my fair cousin; I will so completely engage her attention, that she shall not have time or inclination to listen to the conversation of the rest of the party: it will afford me a little amusement to see her play off her coquettish airs; I know she has a design to captivate me, but she was never more mistaken if she hopes to succeed," said Edward, laughing — "she is too much *à la mode de Paris*, in the costume of her *mind* as well as her *person*; she is so insufferably vain, there is no flattery, however ridiculous, that I could not make her believe."

" Did ever any one hear any thing half so conceited?" said Mrs. Tremayne; " why, Edward, you have a mighty good opinion of yourself! Cecilia, do in charity try and lower this high-flown notion of his; he really believes himself irresistible in the eyes of one of the most celebrated belles in Paris, who would no doubt scoff at the

. idea of bestowing her fair hand on him—the prize that has already been refused to so many of *his* superiors in the Parisian world of fashion.”

“ That I allow,” said her son; “ Victoire has no thought of me as a *cara sposo*, but she has a wish to enrol my name among those of her admiring slaves; her ruling passion, believe me, is vanity and a love of conquest—to indulge either propensity she will leave no means untried.”

“ I think Edward is in the right,” observed his uncle; “ I give him credit for his observation of character: Victoire is, I firmly believe, a true coquette, and consequently the worst companion that could have been selected for Annie; but colonel Campbell, though he by no means approves of the acquaintance with her or the rest of her family, is weak enough to allow her to associate with his daughter, merely because lady Harriet is so very partial to her French acquaintances, these Bironvilles—I fear they will yet endeavour to break the engagement between my

niece and Annandale ; they will too, as a step towards that object, try to prevail on Annie not to give up so much of her time to us ; they know we are her real friends, and may counteract their plans respecting her."

Mr. Hamilton had predicted the exact truth, for when lady Harriet called for Annie, she was most anxious to hear how she had spent the day ; she inquired if lord Annandale had remained long at her uncle's ? was she not much surprised at his arrival ? and twenty other questions of the like frivolous nature, which in themselves appeared trifling, but were in reality meant to sound the opinion of Annie respecting her lover. She, unconscious of the real motives of her ladyship's inquiries, artlessly expressed her delight at seeing him.

" He is a very agreeable young man, but has not half the air of fashion that Eugene has—Poor Eugene !" said lady Harriet, " I fear he has yet a powerful rival in Annandale—But pray, my dear girl, do

not be in too much haste to decide ; I am certain the count will never survive his disappointment, should you refuse him and accept another lover. You cannot imagine how devotedly he loves you ; his whole happiness depends on your sweet smiles, my dear Annie."

Victoire joined her in declaring that none could love more sincerely, more ardently than Eugene—he would be the most miserable of human beings, should he be rejected—it would be the death of her brother; should her dear young friend become the wife of Annandale : she had not discouraged his hopes hitherto ; it would therefore be barbarous, Victoire artfully observed, to retract now—it would drive him to despair, now that he had begun to flatter himself with some little hope that she was not wholly indifferent to his professions of regard.

Annie vainly represented that she had never encouraged the addresses of the count—that she had given him no hopes

of being loved by her—that indeed she never had, and never would *accept* him as her lover, though from the intimate terms he was on in her father's family, she had not discouraged his attentions to herself perhaps so much as she ought to have done.

Irritated rather by the perseverance of her companions, and conscious that she had been led by their persuasions on former occasions to doubt the love of Annandale, and to view the character of Bironville in too favourable a light, Annie would have related all she had recently heard respecting his conduct in Spain; had it not been that his sister was present; unwilling to wound the feelings of Victoire by a recital of her brother's villainy, she contented herself with observing, that he was not the disposition to make her happy, and begged she might be urged no farther as to her reason for rejecting him; she would judge for herself, and disliked being thus treated like a child, in not

· being permitted to have an opinion of her own.

This very petulance of manner betrayed her, for her wary companions were assured by it that she had in some manner detected their plans, and was inclined to receive again the attentions of her former lover; but what they most feared was, that she had been informed of the character of Bironville, which would mostly tend to frustrate their own and his schemes respecting her. With well dissembled kindness and sincerity, they soothed her anger with reiterated professions of regard; Victoire even wept, and declared she was certain some one had prejudiced her dear charming friend against her and poor Eugene, who was indeed most unfortunate, for he had suffered lately the most trying vexations, which he had in confidence related to her as his beloved sister, well knowing how tenderly attached she was to him. She continued weeping, and Annie, really grieved at her apparent distress,

spoke in the tenderest accents of soothing consolation.

"Yes," said Victoire, "my brother is most particularly unfortunate, if you knew all he has had to grieve him. We have a cousin who so nearly resembles Eugene in person and manner, that one has frequently been mistaken for the other, even by their own relations: they were both with the army in Spain, but served in different regiments; both were distinguished for uncommon bravery, but Camille de Bironville was unfortunately a most depraved character, the very reverse of his cousin Eugene, my dear injured brother, who was universally beloved and admired by all his family and acquaintance. Camille, on the contrary, is of a violent imperious disposition; he was detested by the Spaniards for his cruelty and rapacity; to their revenge he at last fell a victim, for he was murdered by the peasantry as he was passing through their village with a small detachment of the troops under his command; the enraged natives, darting

from their ambuscade, singled him out, and instantly put him to death. This last distressing circumstance not being generally known, Eugene has often been taken for his unfortunate and guilty cousin, and accused by many of the crimes perpetrated by Camille de Bironville. You may judge how great must be my grief, dear as Eugene is to me, to imagine that even you, perhaps, may have heard these base unjust accusations—you may probably have been led to believe some of these reports, so prejudicial to his character." At these words Victoire sobbed convulsively, as she embraced her credulous young friend—"Do not, my dearest Annie, add to my affliction, by treating me with coldness and reserve—you know not half my anxiety," said the designing girl to Annie.

Lady Harriet, with well-feigned surprise and dismay, listened to the plausible tale of Victoire, embraced her with sisterly affection, and tried every method to console her afflicted friend.

Annie, with more sincere and heartfelt

pity, endeavoured to raise the drooping spirits of Victoire, assuring her false friend of her unchanged regard for her, and her wish to see her happy.

Victoire thanked her for her kindness, but declared she had been so much agitated by the idea that Annie had been taught to despise her and Eugene, that she and lady Harriet must excuse her not spending the rest of the evening with them; she would retire to her own apartment, and endeavour to calm her mind; her feelings had been cruelly hurt, by recurring in thought to what had caused herself and family so much affliction.

Lady Harriet and Annie in vain urged her not to persist in the determination of absenting herself from their domestic circle. Again embracing them, she assured both ladies it would be the best method she could adopt to calm her grief; in the morning she hoped to be able to enjoy their company. She then retired for the night, and her companions descended to the supper-room.

"Well, Annie, your Caledonian lover has been here, and I suppose I may guess he has been with you at your uncle's? Come, no blushing now, but come to me, I want to talk to you about him. So you really intend to be my lady Annandale? Will your ladyship then favour me with a little conversation?" said colonel Campbell, with a kind of mock ceremoniousness of manner, finding she had made no reply to the former part of his address.

Annie asked him playfully, if he had nothing new to tell her—had no other visitors called on him during her absence?

"What then, you little gipsy, you tacitly confess that all I have already said is no *newes* to *you*, and Annandale is no stranger to *you*? and yet you never before so much as said one syllable of the business to me, and now the mighty secret is out, you are ready to laugh at my surprise? What can you think you deserve as a punishment for treating me with such disrespect? Well, I only hope Annandale may be worthy of *you*, my darling girl,"

said the fond father of Annie, affectionately kissing her cheek. “ But this will be sad news for Bironville; I am glad he is out of the way, or we should have been likely to have had a duel, I fear, between him and your more favoured admirer. I began almost to doubt how your little heart would stand the siege against him; and yet I hoped you knew better than to bestow it on any Frenchman whatever. Eugene is very well, but I should never consent to his being your husband; I had rather you had one of your own country, even if he had not a sixpence of his own—you would have enough of money for you both—I never should make fortune an object of consideration. But I am now talking too seriously to please you, I suppose, my sweet girl: however, remember this, you will never marry a foreigner, if you wish to please your father in the choice of a husband; especially, he must not be a Frenchman—I could not endure the thoughts of your residing always in France, as you then must, in all probability; you

would be so far from all your relations and friends, we should never be able to see you, at least but seldom.—Now, I remember I have not seen Victoire since you came from madame le Brun's—what have you done with her? It is well she was not with us lately, and I have been abusing her countrymen, or what is quite as bad, attempting to put you out of conceit of them, Annie."

"Victoire has been so much fatigued by her numerous visits, that she begged we would excuse her company to supper," said lady Harriet. "Does lord Annandale dine with your uncle to-morrow—do you know, Annie?" inquired her ladyship; "he is engaged to us the day after to be at our ball—and now I think of it, you have not yet been into the ball-room since it has been fitted up—you must go in and look at the decorations Victoire and I fancied for it."

"I had nearly forgotten to tell you and papa, that I am engaged to spend the day

again with my cousin, or I should have been happy to have assisted you and Victoire, if my aid would have been of use ; but I promised to accompany Cecilia and Edward to Chêne Feron ; I am to be at my uncle's rather early, as it is a long walk, and we mean to return to dinner."

" I need not inquire again, I suppose, if lord Annandale is to be of the party ? " observed lady Harriet, evidently piqued at Annie's having engaged herself without consulting her or Victoire. " I and your father are now quite forsaken for your uncle and cousin : I suppose, now lord Annandale is come, we shall never be favoured with your company—he no doubt will spend much of his time with Mr. Hamilton. I am quite jealous, Annie, for it was very different in Paris ; I then thought you took pleasure in being with me, but I am entirely forgotten now; yet I have ever studied to make you happy, as much as was in my power; and there is that poor girl, Victoire—she quite grieves at your neglect of her, since you came to

Dinan. I know the Hamiltons are the cause of all your unkindness to us both; it makes me miserable—so tenderly attached as I am to you, I cannot bear this cruel neglect and indifference from you, Annie, whom I have, and still continue to love as if you were indeed my own child; I regard you with the fondest affection of a mother."

Lady Harriet concluded this reproach with a deep sigh, and bursting into tears, implored her astonished auditress to tell her the cause which had effected such a change in her manners towards her and Victoire—what it was the Hamiltons had said against them.

Colonel Campbell and the affectionate Annie endeavoured to console her ladyship with the assurance that she was perfectly mistaken in the belief that she had been purposely neglected and avoided; the kind compassionate girl assured her, that if she wished it, she would send an excuse to Cecilia, and not go, as had been intended; but this proposal her ladyship would not consent to.

" My dear Harriet," said colonel Campbell, " I am quite hurt that you should have taken this in so serious a light: Annie would on no account, I am certain, offend or neglect you, whom I am convinced she sincerely loves; your reproaches will make her quite unhappy: it was but natural she should wish to be with her uncle and cousin as much as possible, now she is near to them. Consider, my love, how seldom she has it in her power to see them in general. But, attached as she is to her relations, she would not wish to forsake your company, as you seem to imagine; on the contrary, she is now, you find, willing to give up an intended party of pleasure, rather than grieve you. Come, embrace each other, and be friends again," said he, putting Annie towards lady Harriet, who readily complied with her father's request, declaring she had never intended any slight to her ladyship, and if she had offended, it was quite unintentional; she would write a note to Cecilia in the morning, to make her excuse for not

· being one of the party at Mr. Hamilton's, and with Victoire, would remain at home to assist in arranging plans for the decorations of the apartments in readiness for the intended fete.

Lady Harriet embraced the affectionate girl, as she stood weeping at the offence she had given to her friend, and earnestly wishing to convince her she had not listened to any insinuations against her, but still loved and esteemed her; she could have added how warmly she had defended the cause of her ladyship that very day, even in opposition to the opinion of lord Annandale and Cecilia; but such a circumstance Annie was too generous to refer to, however distantly—she felt all that she professed, love and gratitude for the kindness and affection of lady Harriet, but was unwilling to enter into any engagement to resign entirely the company of her relations, the Hamiltons; nor could she believe her ladyship would be so selfish as to demand such a sacrifice; yet to calm her jealous fears for the present, Annie

consented to absent herself from her uncle's on the following day.

Lady Harriet affected to be entirely convinced of her mistake, and that Annie did not regard her less than before the arrival of the Hamiltons ; she would not listen to the proposal made, that she should have her company the whole of the next day, instead of spending that time at Mr. Hamilton's ; her ladyship said she could not be so ungenerous as to deprive her beloved Annie of any indulgence it was in her power to grant.—“ Only promise me, my sweet girl,” said she, “ that you will not be cruelly prejudiced against me —that you will not listen to any tales of scandal formed against my character by the envious and illiberal world.”

Annie having again repeated her promise that she would not be biassed in her opinions by such malicious reports, and again assured her that she would for the future divide her time more equally between her own and her uncle's family, tranquillity was restored, and colonel

Campbell beheld with satisfaction the reconciliation between his wife and daughter.

When Annie had retired to her own apartment for the night, all the various and unexpected occurrences of the past day recurred to her imagination; the idea that Annandale was so near, and that they were now reconciled, afforded her the most perfect happiness—she had now no care, no anxiety, for he had forgiven her, and was as fondly attached to her as ever. With this pleasing reflection she composed her lately agitated spirits, and fell into a calm and peaceful slumber. In the morning, when she awoke, the recollection of all that had passed the preceding day appeared more like a dream than a reality.—“Is Annandale indeed at Dinan?” thought she, “or am I still dreaming?” But memory, faithful to its trust, recalled the scenes of yesterday, and depicted them so clearly to the mind of Annie, that she no longer doubted.

When all were assembled at breakfast but Victoire, who had not yet made her

appearance, lady Harriet inquired of Annie, if she should have any objection to the company of the fair Parisian?—" It will be quite a charity to take her with you to-day," said her ladyship ; " but you must ask her yourself, or she will be apt to fear she is intruding on you ; and that, I am certain, my love, you would not wish."

Annie promised compliance, and just then Victoire appeared, quite recovered from her late indisposition ; she and lady Harriet seemed to vie with each other in flattering and caressing Annie ; peace and contentment again presided over this little family party.

Victoire appeared highly gratified with Annie's request that she would accompany her to Mr. Hamilton's. Though rather early in their visit, they found lord Annandale was arrived before them. Cecilia and her cousin proposed taking their sketch-books, but feared the gentlemen would not know how to amuse themselves while they were drawing, as it would be

desirable that they should remain with them, or at no great distance, for both ladies were fearful of remaining alone in so retired a situation ; yet it would be, they thought, extremely tedious to the rest of the party to wait for them.

" Mademoiselle de Bironville will perhaps take compassion on us," said Edward, " and will not devote her whole time to drawing—she will favour us with her company while you are engaged," added he, with the perfect air of French gallantry.

Cecilia, who understood his real motive, could scarcely forbear smiling at the self-satisfied complacency of manner with which that vain young woman received the attentions of her cousin Edward, who evidently felt great pleasure in the idea of engrossing the attention of all the young men in the party.

When they arrived at the chateau, monsieur Feron received them with all the politeness of the old French school ; he walked over the grounds with them, and pointed out the most beautiful views over

the adjacent country. A long avenue of immense fir trees led towards the mansion: this was at once the pride and boast of the venerable owner; some of these lofty trees he had been compelled from necessity to cut down, to pay the heavy fine levied on him for his eldest son, who had emigrated: the youth had afterwards died in England, and the unhappy father never saw him from the time he left France, to wander in poverty, an exile in a foreign land. The old man appeared deeply affected as he related the melancholy fate of his lamented son, whose miniature he shewed them, which he had preserved as a sad relic of one once so dear to him.

Monsieur Feron afterwards, at the request of his visitors, shewed them his gardens, laid out in the French style, with terraces and parterres; he presented them with some of his choicest fruits, but most particularly called their attention to a large stone that lay near a seat in the centre walk of the garden; it was unhewn, and had nothing remarkable in its appearance,

unless taken in one particular point of view. Monsieur Feron begged they would observe it, and see if they could trace in its form any resemblance to a human countenance, and say who they thought it like. The whole party at once agreed it was the exact image of the unfortunate Louis XVI.

This natural curiosity had been dug out of the adjoining grounds just as it was then seen ; the owner had had it in his possession for many years, but had been obliged to conceal it great part of that time for fear of the jacobins, for they would have destroyed even this poor memento of their murdered sovereign, as they had another of a similar kind, found in a distant part of the country soon after the death of the king.

The chateau of Chêne Feron was an old irregular building, not very remarkable either for beauty or extent; the owner was poor, and had no money to spare in repairing it. Mr. Hamilton and his party were ushered into a half-furnished looking room,

which could boast of nothing worthy of attention but some exceedingly beautiful portraits, all finished with exquisite delicacy; they were curiously arranged, to shew the different costumes of the last thirty years or more; some of the faces were most lovely, and the dress of many of the figures becoming and elegant. Cecilia and Annie were expressing their admiration of them, when they overheard Edward tell Victoire he could not possibly give his attention to mere inanimate portraits; when he had the opportunity of studying the most lovely face in nature, which no art could imitate.

Mrs. Tremayne, who thought him in earnest, looked at her son in astonishment, as if she doubted her sense of hearing. Edward, who had observed his mother's look of doubt and surprise, had nearly betrayed that he was but acting a part, by an unfortunate laugh; but Victoire happened to be just at that moment contemplating her fine features in a large mirror, near to where she and Mr. Tremayne were

standing—the cause of his laughing thus escaped her notice.

On taking leave o' monsieur Feron, he strongly urged them to come again whenever they should be inclined to take another ramble over the grounds of Chêne Feron; this they readily promised, and parted with the old and hospitable owner, much pleased with the engaging urbanity of his manners.

Having next fixed on the most picturesque point of view, Cecilia and Annie prepared to take a sketch of the scene that had so much attracted their admiration. While thus engaged, Victoire, unperceived by either of the cousins, wandered to some distance from them, and pretending to be weary of waiting, had begged lord Annandale and Edward would accompany her in a walk; for her part, she detested the dull employment of the pencil—she preferred the more cheerful amusement of rambling through the delightful groves by which they were surrounded, and enjoying the charms of conversation.

The two gentlemen could not in politeness refuse, and both consented to accompany her, as she declared she was quite tired of remaining so long in the same place, and could not share in the amusement of Cecilia and her cousin. Having gained her point, as she imagined, in attracting, by the power of her superior charms, the undivided attention of both gentlemen from her fair rivals and competitors for admiration, Victoire was delighted, and secretly exulted over the conquest she vainly flattered herself she should obtain over the hearts of the young nobleman and his friend; she laughed, flirted, and trifled, with all her wonted vivacity and fascination, but at length wearied her supposed admirers by her folly, and disgusted them by her intolerable levity: they returned to the lovely objects of their unfeigned admiration and love with renewed satisfaction, to whom Victoire triumphantly related the most trivial attentions she had received, and dwelt with evident pleasure on the gallantry of her attendant

beaux; she could, she told them, almost imagine they had been educated at Paris!

This was the highest praise she could possibly bestow on the superior elegance of their address and style of compliment: with mademoiselle de Bironville, the being *à la mode de Paris* was the very highest recommendation—whatever the object in question might be, this gave it a claim to universal superiority.

The day being remarkably fine, the walk home was delightfully pleasant to the whole party, but Edward found his enjoyment considerably lessened, by being under the necessity of conversing with, and amusing Victoire; she now seemed to claim the whole of his time and attention, preventing his shewing any attention to Cecilia, or indeed any one of the company but herself; he more than once repented most heartily the promise he had made to his cousin of withdrawing the attention of Victoire from her and Annie, by taking upon himself the task to amuse such a contemptible being as he considered the

gay Parisian: at first, he entered into the scheme with great spirit, but at length, wearied beyond all patience, he resigned her to Mr. Hamilton and the worthy but sedate old doctor, who were but little calculated to be the companions of one of her disposition and manners.

Mrs. Tremayne perceiving her son's wish to get rid of his companion, and to join the party of his cousins and Annandale, did all in her power to amuse Victoire in their way home—conversed with her on the subjects she would be most likely to be interested in; but the shrewd Frenchwoman perceived that she was considered as an unwelcome intruder to the younger part of the family, and that Edward had become weary of her company: her late excess of vivacity vanished at once—the conquest she hoped to make was by no means so certain as but a short time before she had vainly imagined; she was indeed treated with politeness, but nothing more, for neither of the young men had either time or inclination to devote themselves

entirely to her; that Cecilia and Annie were the objects of real admiration, was but too visible to the envious and disappointed Victoire, who secretly vowed revenge against the innocent beings who were the cause of her severe humiliation and vexation: she determined to persist in her plan of raising the jealousy of Cecilia, whom she hated for being beloved by Edward; and with him she was equally enraged for his neglect of her and preference for *another* when *she* was present; she would at all events make him doubt the affection of Cecilia, and believe she deceived him: could she not succeed in rousing the jealousy of *her*, she would of *him*—time would, she trusted, give her the opportunity. Respecting Annie and her lover, she had previously determined to undermine their happiness—she would yet try to break the engagement between them, from other, but not more powerful motives.

CHAPTER III.

NOTHING material occurred the remainder of the day. The same party met again the following night at the ball given by lady Harriet Campbell, which was as elegant and splendid as could possibly be expected in a small provincial town like Dinan, so very remote from the capital: it was, to her ladyship's great satisfaction, both fashionably and numerously attended; but the most conspicuously elegant people there assembled were of her own and Mr. Hamilton's family, though by far the least loaded with ornaments and finery, such as their French acquaintance had seemingly attempted to vie each other in, both as to expence and profusion.

Cecilia and Annie, as *les belles Anglaises*, attracted universal attention and curiosity, not from their beauty only, but

from the all-powerful charm of novelty, which claims so much favour in the estimation of the world in general, at least of that class of it denominated fashionables : the simple elegance of the English costume, such as it was before the rage for every kind of French frippery had intruded on our fashions, and disguised the fair daughters of Britain, levelling their more correct ideas of propriety in dress to the absurd standard of taste among their foreign neighbours—that peculiar but pleasing mode of adorning the female form with modest simple elegance, which our heroines had assumed on the evening before-mentioned, was finely contrasted with that of the rest of the party—not that either of the cousins had that motive in view when they gave the preference to their own national neatness and plainness of attire, such as it was in 1814, but in compliance with the requests of those most dear to them.

'Cecilia really disliked the very cumber-

some style of decoration then and still so prevalent in France; she had, besides, another motive, which was probably what influenced her choice in the style of dress even more than her own predilection for simplicity of decoration—Edward had frequently declared his opinion on that subject, in which he perfectly agreed with her; he had even entreated she would not adopt the French fashions more than she considered indispensably necessary, or at least, if to avoid singularity she must in part conform, he hoped she would exert her own more correct taste in *moderating* them.

Mr. Hamilton seconded this last proposal, and as not one dissenting voice attempted to influence her, she consented to appear at the ball in the *English style* of dress. Annie, who was present while this important point was discussing, in which Annandale joined, and, as she expected, voted for her renouncing her French costume, which she had recently adopted, quite to the extreme of the mode, in com-

pliment to the Bironvilles, accordingly resolved to accompany her cousin in a similar dress to that worn by Cecilia.

On the morning after this fete, while Mrs. Tremayne and her niece were descending on the entertainment it afforded them, and like most *ladies*, giving their opinions on the dress and manners of those they had seen and been introduced to, Mr. Hamilton and Edward were as much engaged in passing their judgment on the several *visitors* at the Campbells'. One young man, a monsieur le Blanc, had particularly attracted their attention, together with his companion, an officer in the uniform of the king's guard; both were elegant and uncommonly pleasing in manner, especially the former, who had been Cecilia's partner in several dances; his military friend had been favoured with the hand of her lively little cousin.

Mrs. Tremayne now joining in the comments passed on the company by her brother and son, inquired if they knew who that tall officer in the very splendid uni-

form was, that waltzed with Annie? "I could hardly endure to see him whirling her round in the dance, he appeared to me such a strange—and I must own, such a ferocious-looking being I thought him, that he almost terrified me; his immense mustachios concealed nearly half his face, and what was visible of it was so pale and emaciated, that I kept fancying he must be one of those who had been at Moscow; and, agreeable as he certainly was in conversation, yet I was so silly as to feel prejudiced against him."

"It is rather extraordinary you should have guessed so near the truth," said Edward, "for Annandale informed me that the person you allude to, he had heard, was indeed at Snolensko; he is now in the king's guards," added he: "rather a sudden transition this in *politics*, I must own, but such things are too common to be noticed in this country: many of the French are Buonapartists one day, and royalists the next; D'Anville had as soon be one as the other, I fancy, provided he but retain

his rank in the army—it is but to change the colour of his coat, and throw by the deserted eagle: and, now I think of it, I will give you an instance of the ease with which the French get over all these kind of difficulties. The other day, when I was conversing about the emperor to young Ulyse de Belmont, he declared his admiration of the character of Napoleon, notwithstanding he at that very time was wearing the insignia of the Bourbon party. Pointing to it, I asked him how he could reconcile his *opinions* with that decoration? ‘Ah! *that* is for the *world*, but *this* is next my *heart!*’ exclaimed he with energy, as he pointed to an embroidered eagle he had concealed in his bosom. The devotion of this young man to the emperor is well known, as well as that of his whole family: this alone proves that all who hoist the white flag or wear the white cockade are not the true partizans of Louis; they are not indiscriminately to be relied on—they wait but the fit opportunity for rebellion, to shew their real principles; fo-

reigners are too often deceived by their professions, and blindly imagine the greater part of the people are for the Bourbons."

"I am not much of a politician, my dear Edward," said Mrs. Tremayne, "but I do not doubt the justice of your remark. But how did you like monsieur le Brun? he seems perfectly good-natured and obliging—I had a long chat with him, while all you young people were dancing; he amused me with anecdotes of the different individuals whom I saw assembled at colonel Campbell's."

"I really did not particularly notice him, but he appears a good kind of man enough," replied Edward; "I saw that he was trying to amuse you by his lively conversation and observations on the company, and——"

"That was ridiculous enough," said Mr. Hamilton, interrupting his nephew, as if he had just called to mind something he had lately heard of the person then spoken of; "Le Brun is himself the talk of the town for allowing his wife so much

liberty; I am told she flirts with every man of rank or fashion she is introduced to: for my own part, I always thought she had too much levity in her conduct—did you notice her last night with the younger Le Blanc? I was so disgusted with the boldness of her manners, that I must beg you and Cecilia will discontinue your visits to her: I extremely regret we were introduced to her and monsieur le Brun, as I fear he will feel hurt at our not continuing the acquaintance; but I cannot allow a child of mine to associate with one of the character I think madame le Brun to be. My friend Bonneval, who was induced to hope the society of monsieur le Brun would be a source of entertainment to us, knowing his companionable qualifications and friendly disposition, was but little acquainted with the character of madame le Brun, being but seldom at Dinan since the marriage of his friend, who had been long known to him—indeed the count told me they had been & rinerly much together when in Paris."

Mr. Hamilton and Edward left the ladies to their morning occupations, while they went to call on colonel Campbell, lord Annandale, and his friend doctor Ellerslie; but changing their determination afterwards as to the rotation of the several visits they had to pay, both gentlemen went first to the Hotel de Commerce, where they found the worthy old doctor, who, upon an inquiry being made for lord Annandale, informed them his lordship was already at colonel Campbell's—there they must seek his pupil, who, he gaily said, had played truant that morning, and left him to study alone.—“He has found a *book* for himself, which engages all his attention, and, I believe, has more charm in his eyes than all the classic pages of antiquity,” said Ellerslie, as he laid down his spectacles upon the folio which he had been perusing when Mr. Hamilton and Edward interrupted his studies, which in the absence of his beloved pupil the doctor had again resumed: the charm of literary pursuits in his active

mind age had not abated—he still considered the attainment of useful knowledge as the employment and recreation of his life; when not called upon to exert himself in the service of his fellow-beings. Ellerslie was indeed a truly amiable and superior character; few could, like him, so well blend the studious sedateness of the man of learning, with the playful benevolence of the man of wit, tempered by good-nature.

Some days after the ball, when one morning Annie, contriving to elude the vigilance of lady Harriet and Victoire, ran off to her uncle's to spend a few hours *tête-à-tête* with her cousin, whom she found alone and engaged in writing to Emily Carisford.—“What are you doing, my sweet bonnie lassie?” said she. “Oh, a letter, I see, and to that dear little quiet soul, Emily: does it contain any very great secrets—or may I see it?” added the playful girl, as she pretended to wish to read the letter her cousin had just finished.

Cecilia refused, and as Annie persisted

in her request, merely to tease her companion, she attempted to conceal the letter, the subject of debate.

"I know why I must not read it—you *used* to let me, you know, read all those you sent to Emily before this one; you have been telling her all about Edward, that he is your declared, and if I am not mistaken, your accepted lover. Now, is it not so, sweet Cissy? I have guessed it—you cannot contradict me—now can you?" said the little lively tormentor, as she pretended to scrutinize the expression of Cecilia's countenance.

Cecilia certainly looked rather embarrassed, for had her cousin read the letter, she would undoubtedly have observed that Edward was the subject of a great part of her epistle to Emily.—"Ah! I see you cannot deny it; Edward has declared himself your adoring lover, and he has been accepted," said Annie; "it is as I very wisely guessed it would be; and now I know why you would not waltz with that very handsome man, le Blanc—you were afraid

Edward would be jealous. I really was quite angry with you for refusing; but what harm could there have been, even if you were engaged? I think nothing of these precise notions: you saw I waltzed readily enough with D'Anville, though he is such a grim terrific-looking being, with his great black mustachios; yet he dances delightfully—he puts me in mind of a great tiger-cat, he is so very graceful, and at the same time so fierce-looking, particularly in his regimentals, almost covered with fur-trimmings and gold. A thought has just now struck me, Cecilia: what a charming ball you might make up here among all the old cats and birds! they would look so well, placed *en colonnes*, as the French call our English country-dances. Let me see, the cat shall begin with the crane," said she, placing them on the floor opposite each other, and after them, all the rest of the animals, ranged in the same manner: she then caught up an old violin of monsieur le Tôur's, that lay near her on the secretaire, and began

scraping away with all her might, every moment obliged to stop, from laughing, which she did most heartily at her own wild conceit; it was in vain Cecilia endeavoured to look serious, and remind her that some of their acquaintance in the town might call in and find her thus ridiculously engaged; yet as she could not entirely command her countenance sufficiently to prove that she took no part in her cousin's merriment, it was in vain Cecilia pleaded and remonstrated—Annie would not suffer her to replace the animals on their several stands, but stood enjoying the anxiety of her companion lest any one should witness *her* folly in being so amused. This, and the really droll appearance of monsieur le Tour's collection of natural curiosities, was sufficient to excite the mirth of the laughter-loving girl, who had caused the confusion which at this moment prevailed; when to the consternation of both the ladies, Nanon came to tell them an old Eng-

Wish gentleman had called, and wished to see Mr. Hamilton.

"Oh dear!" cried Annie, in ludicrous distress, "it is the doctor—I am sure it is doctor Ellerslie; for Heaven's sake do not see him! what shall I do? *Pas visible, pas visible!* dear good Nanon," she exclaimed, in great agitation, wishing the simple girl, who stood staring, first at her, and then at the strange disposal she had made of the stuffed animals, to deny them.

"*Quoi?*" said Nanon, in utter astonishment, "*quoi, madame? mais c'est un monsieur Anglois,*" repeated the girl, fearing the ladies had misunderstood her.

"Dear Cecilia, do pray send that poor stupid creature away, and bid her deny us to the doctor—it is thought nothing of here; only oblige me this once, and I will not play the fool so here again; but I cannot see Ellerslie; I would not have him catch me thus engaged on any account—I always used to be frightened out of my senses at him; he will now think me more

trifling than ever—what shall I do?" said Annie.

Up she then scrambled all the cats, birds, and the rest of the assemblage on the floor, and running into the anti-room, threw them all of a heap on the couch; then spying a closet, she opened it and ran in, hastily shutting the door after her, as she heard the sound of approaching footsteps. She was but just in time to save herself from being seen by doctor Ellerslie and her uncle, who entered the room the moment after; Mr. Hamilton had left Edward at colonel Campbell's, and on his return home saw the doctor at the door of his lodgings, and made him go in with him.

Cecilia, in great trepidation, received them, having first put by the old violin which Annie in her haste had left on her work-table. The gentlemen sat down and chatted for some time, without any suspicion of what had happened; but our heroine, fearing the impatience of Annie to be released from her prison would at

length overcome her desire of being concealed from the dreaded doctor, expected every moment she would betray herself, either by laughing, or incautiously attempt escaping unobserved, which was nearly impossible, as Mr. Hamilton had left the door open between the room they were sitting in and the anti-room, to allow a free circulation of air, as the weather was uncommonly hot for so late in the season.

Cecilia never so heartily wished to get rid of her visitors as at this time, and scarcely could she disguise her satisfaction when he rose to depart; she felt unwilling to increase his opinion of the extreme childishness and trifling disposition of her cousin, which she was aware, as well as Annie herself, that the doctor already entertained of her; should she now discover herself, she would undoubtedly make them both appear ridiculous, and the cause of Annie's concealment must be explained.

At length both the gentlemen left the room together, and doctor Ellerslie had proceeded with his usual sober step

through the anti-room, when all on a sudden, raising his leg very much with the air of a dancing-bear beginning his *pas seul*, he exclaimed vehemently—" My foot! my foot! something has wounded me in my foot!"

On the floor lay monsieur le Tour's hedgehog, over which Ellerslie had stumbled, the sharp prickles of which actually penetrated through the shoe, and wounded the foot of the poor old doctor. With his usual good temper, he made light of the injury, and picking up the cause of his suffering, he went to place it on a table that stood near, when he perceived on the couch the heterogenous collection that Annie had thrown there; the hedgehog, in her great haste, she had let fall, and from the dark gloomy appearance of the ill-lighted room through which the gentlemen had to pass in their way to the staircase, neither Mr. Hamilton or his friend had before observed the confusion that was but too evident on a nearer inspection.—" What in the name of wonder

have we here?" said Ellerslie to Mr. Hamilton, who, surprised to find monsieur le Tour's pets so strangely disposed of, inquired of Cecilia the cause of their removal; but was only answered by an imploring look from his daughter, beseeching him to make no more inquiries on the subject.

He readily comprehended her meaning, but could not imagine her motive of concealment: wishing to relieve her embarrassment in some degree, he said—“ You have probably taken them down to be dusted; I suppose, Cecilia, you were willing monsieur le Tour's collection should look to the best advantage this morning; but the hedgehog has not, I fear, recommended himself much to our friend the doctor—he had rather too great a proof of the *piquante* qualities of the animal, to find him an agreeable companion, or an object of admiration.”

He then proposed to leave Cecilia to her housewife-like employment, and he

would in the meantime walk with his friend to the hotel.

The moment they were gone, and almost before they had descended the windings of the dark and narrow staircase, out darted Annie from the closet, delighted that she could at last regain her liberty.— “How glad I am the old fellow is gone!” said she, “what an unreasonable time he staid, as if he had known what I had been at, and where I was—he could not have wished me a more severe punishment for my folly, had he known every thing. I was near being stifled, what with my laughing and the close imprisonment in that detestable place, where I could neither see nor speak—but I thought I must have betrayed myself when the doctor fell over the hedgehog, it was so truly ridiculous! I could not help enjoying his dismay, though I hope he was not very seriously hurt either. Dear Cecilia, I beg ten thousand pardons for having brought you into such a dilemma; but I really dreaded to meet the old man, his very

wig used to be an object of terror to me when I was a child—I never could look at it without awe."

Cecilia and Annie were engaged in replacing the animals in their usual positions when Mr. Hamilton returned, and to his great astonishment found his niece there before him; he had not been absent but a few minutes, and she was not, he imagined, at his house when he left it, though he had expected to see her with his daughter when he came home with the doctor.—“Annie, where have you been, child, that we have all been so unaccountably misled in our opinion of whose house you were at? Your father told me I should find you here, he made no doubt, when I came home not long ago with doctor Ellerslie; but you were not with Cecilia then, as I expected—where can you have been all this time, you little madcap?”

“Dear sir, I was here, only you did not see me,” said Annie, enjoying his perplexity. She then repeated part of the

conversation between him and Ellerslie, to convince her uncle she had indeed been at his house, as she asserted.

" You have been playing some of your wild pranks, I can guess," said Mr. Hamilton. " Cecilia, do you tell me the plain truth—has not your mischievous cousin been engaged in some ridiculous frolic?"

Cecilia had just explained the whole circumstance to her father, when lord Annandale and Edward called to inquire if Annie were there, as lady Harriet could not imagine what had become of her? She wished her to return home, as she had invited a party of young people to spend the evening with her and Victoire.

" Then you see, if I had not made my escape when I did, I should not have been able to come at all to see you, Cecilia," said Annie. " I wish they were not so very jealous of my being here; Victoire makes herself so miserable if I but leave her for an hour or two, that I am almost tempted to wish madame de Birouville would come and fetch her away. I have something to

tell you, Cecilia, but cannot stay now, and I had forgotten it till this moment—I shall see you again, however, in the evening; you will be of this party, I hope: do come—there is a dear girl; lady Harriet begged me to invite you as often as I pleased, she should be happy to see you; so make no excuses, but come."

After Annie was gone, madame le Tour and Mrs. Tremayne returned from their walk; the latter had been out the whole morning; Cecilia excused herself from accompanying them, as she had letters to get ready for England. Mrs. Tremayne on her return was much surprised to find her niece still writing.—“ My dear child, what, not finished yet? One would think you were secretary to the prime minister, to have so very much writing on your hands; have you been thus employed ever since I left you?”

“ I have scarcely written one word since I saw you,” replied Cecilia, “ but Annie has been here—I need give no other reason for having made so little use of my

time; it is impossible, you know, to be steady to any employment where she is."

Cecilia then related what had passed during the absence of her aunt, upon which Mrs. Tremayne observed, that the manners of Annie were not likely to be steadied, in the society of those she now lived with—Victoire de Bironville was the worst companion that could have been selected for her.—“That dear child,” said she, alluding to Annie, “is, I fear, even more giddy and frivolous than ever. I cannot imagine what her grandfather and Mrs. Berwick will do with her when she returns to Dunethvin—they will think her almost mad; I wish she had never left Scotland; she was always disposed to be exceedingly thoughtless and trifling, and French manners and customs have certainly not tended to lessen those defects in her conduct.”

“She never will be steady—she will not learn to think, but acts constantly from the impulse of the moment,” said Mr. Hamilton; “and what is, in my opinion, to

be regretted, she has so much playful and winning vivacity, that it is next to impossible to be seriously displeased with her for any length of time, however one may disapprove of her conduct in many particulars."

The first opportunity Annie had of being alone with her cousin, she told her that lady Harriet had received a letter from madame de Bironville, in which she said that she and Eugene intended to be with them in a short time.

Cecilia was not very well pleased with this intelligence; she feared De Bironville and Edward could not be long together without a serious quarrel, for the insolence of Eugene was, she allowed, enough to provoke the resentment of her cousin, who, from the sincerity of his natural disposition, could not always so control his feelings as not to evince his aversion and contempt of the count. She told Annie her fears and anxiety respecting her lover, but was most agreeably surprised by the

assurance that Edward had been mistaken, and that Eugene was not the identical De Bironville he had imagined; she hoped that, once convinced of this, he would be inclined to behave with more cordiality to the count, or at least treat him with common politeness, as an indifferent acquaintance.—“But why,” thought she, for the moment doubting the credibility of the tale related to her, “why had De Bironville from the first wished to avoid Edward? and, when they did meet, receive him with so much haughty reserve as the count certainly had, so as even to attract the attention of the whole party assembled, if he were indeed a perfect stranger, and not the same De Bironville her cousin had known in Spain?”

But these unwelcome doubts were silenced by the repeated assurances of Annie, that Victoire had related every particular so clearly to her and lady Harriet, that it was impossible not to feel entirely convinced that the count had been unfortunately mistaken for his cousin Camille

de Bironville, who had so justly suffered the punishment of his crimes.

Annie being gone, and Cecilia left to reflect calmly on what she had heard, felt but half convinced of the truth of the account given by Victoire of Eugene; she resolved, at all events, to mention the circumstance to her father, and rely on his superior judgment and better experience, before she would venture to decide on an opinion of her own, where the character of an individual was so materially concerned; she was unwilling to wrong the count by unjust suspicions, yet she could not but own that what his sister asserted was not always to be relied on with implicit confidence, such as Annie had ever, and was still willing to give to the perfidious Victoire.

On her return home from colonel Campbell's, Cecilia related every particular of her cousin's conversation respecting the count, to her father. Edward was present, and his mother: the latter hoping they

might have mistaken Eugene, as has been mentioned, was not so much disconcerted at the probability of his return, as she would otherwise have been.

"We are all so happy now," said Mrs. Tremaine, "that I could have wished the Bironvilles were not coming to Dinan: I do not like either the count or his mother; but if we have been mistaken, at any rate there is nothing to fear: as we have done the young man an injustice in suspecting him of crimes he has not been guilty of. I hope, Edward, you will be more conciliating in your manner towards him, when he does come; let me entreat you, my dear boy, for my sake do nothing to provoke his anger; Cecilia, I am certain, will join me in this request—will you not, my love?" said she.

To which her niece most sincerely agreed with her in opinion, and earnestly begged Edward would listen to the advice of his mother, in this instance at least; neither of them, she assured him, wished him to seek the society of Eugene, if disagreeable

to him, but on no account to excite his malice and revenge.

"I most heartily wish something may prevent his coming, for I have my doubts if this be not another artifice of lady Harriet's, and her favourite Victoire," said Mr. Hamilton: "do you think it likely, Edward, you could have been so deceived?"

"I have no doubts on the subject, sir—I am confident this Eugene de Bironville is the very man I met with in Spain; I cannot be mistaken, I saw him there so frequently. But I will engage, should he come again to Dinan, not wilfully to provoke his rage—I will not, for the sake of Cecilia and my mother, resent his haughty looks and manner as I would otherwise—I would, rather than grieve them, purposely avoid meeting that detested miscreant, but that in so doing he might be led to believe I feared him," said Edward.

"That is impossible, after what the count has himself witnessed of your conduct when abroad," observed Cecilia.

CHAPTER IV.

TIME passed so agreeably and so rapidly with Cecilia, that she was not aware they had been half so long absent from Wyecliffe.—“Can we have left England now above two months?” said she, one day to her aunt; “we left home the beginning of September, I believe, and it is now the tenth of November; I could not have thought we had been near so long a time in France.”

“It is a proof, however, that your time has been spent agreeably, my love,” said Mrs. Tremayne; “you have never in all your life been so gay as since we have been here; it has been one continual round of visiting with us; the Campbells will make us, I fear, as fond of company as themselves: but I think we are not to remain much longer at Dinan.”

"The latter end of this month we are going to Rennes," said Cecilia, "my father was telling doctor Ellerslie so this morning; he said too, that after staying a few weeks there, we should proceed to Paris, to remain there the winter: colonel Campbell and he have arranged the whole plan. I long to see Paris; and as to Annie, she is almost counting the days before she is once more to visit it, for she is heartily weary of being at Dinan—it is too dull for her, now that the season is past. That dear girl, I fear, is sadly out of favour just now with my father and doctor Ellerslie: she and Annandale have had a little misunderstanding; he remonstrated, I am told, on some part of her conduct which he highly disapproved of, and she is offended with him for attempting to dictate to her; she very well knows her uncle will blame her, and that is the reason why we have not seen her these two days, at least I imagine it to be so. Do you think my father would object to my calling on her to-day? Perhaps, my dear aunt,

'you would be so kind as to go with me? Do let us try to reconcile them. I know Annie loves him as much as ever, but she is so giddy and impatient of contradiction, more so even than she used to be—she will not now be guided by me as formerly: lady Harriet has been persuading her that Anrandale is too rigid in his notions of female conduct, that he wishes to control her too much, and is jealous of her."

Mrs. Tremayne agreed to accompany Cecilia to colonel Campbell's on her visit to Annie. For a wonder, they found her alone: conscious that she had acted unjustly, in being so petulant with her lover, she felt out of temper with herself and all about her; she had persisted in not going to the party to which she had been engaged with lady Harriet and Victoire—in spite of all they could urge, she would remain at home. She evidently had been weeping, but with assumed cheerfulness received her cousin and Mrs. Tremayne. Still she appeared embarrassed, notwithstanding her efforts to regain composure

of manner; she seemed as if there was something she had to relate, but felt reluctant to lead to the subject.

Cecilia perceiving this, inquired why she had not come to *them*, if not disposed to go with lady Harriet? In reply to this, Annie pleaded as her excuse, that she had a severe headache, and was, besides, very much out of spirits.

"But, my love," said Mrs. Tremayne, "though not well enough to go into a large party, perhaps you might be able to bear the company of Cecilia and myself? Come home with us—it will amuse and do you good."

"I fear I shall meet Annandale at your lodgings, and that morose ill-tempered creature Ellerslie; he has caused mischief enough already to make me most miserable."

"How can doctor Ellerslie have caused you any vexation? What do you mean, Annie?" inquired Cecilia.

"Oh yes, he has; he is a cross old fel-

low, only fit for a hermit, to live by himself—I dislike him more than ever: he has persuaded Annandale that I am thoughtless, extravagant, and so trifling, there is no dependence on me—that I have too much levity of manner since I came to France; and I know not what besides that is spiteful, he has said of me. I was as happy as possible the first three weeks or so after we came here—it was quite delightful; but now Annandale begins to think he has a right to interfere in my conduct—he would not have thought of dictating to me, if he had not been advised: much as I love him, I am determined not to submit to be checked for every trifle like a child, when I every day see lady Harriet and Victoire do just as they please—nobody thinks of controlling them. I know you and my uncle will blame me, but then you are both so steady and so good. I wish I was always with you, and then I should not be getting into trouble so frequently as I am now, and have been lately, for this is not the first time Annandale

has thought proper to censure me; but I never was so angry with him in my life as I am now, and yet I know he means well—but he is really too particular; I fear I shall be miserable as his wife, and yet I cannot resolve to dismiss him. I wish he would send the old doctor back to Scotland—he has a heart as hard and as cold as his own bleak hills and barren mountains; I shall never forgive him."

Cecilia, who had never known her cousin so irritated as at present, was grieved to witness the ill effects of extreme indulgence on a temper which she had ever considered as most amiable.—“My dear Annie,” said she, “do tell me calmly what has occasioned all this trouble? Do not be too hasty: I must say, I fear the good old doctor has had too much reason to be displeased with your behaviour to Annandale. Let me, my dearest girl, entreat you to be more on your guard—you are too thoughtless: *you* must not take example by Victoire; she is, as I have frequently told you, too free in her manners—she cannot be re-

spected by those who are judges of female decorum—you know your uncle's opinion of her. Annandale, when he sees you misled by her conduct into the same levity and folly, thinks it his duty to warn you of your danger; and loving you as he does, he is anxious you should not injure yourself in the estimation of the prudent and rational part of society. He loves you, I am convinced, with unabated affection; if he loved you less, he would be more indifferent as to what was said of you, and the censure you might incur in the world from following the example of the silly and imprudent, not to say the vicious, in which light may be considered many you now persist in encouraging the acquaintance of, contrary to the advice of all your real friends. I will tell you frankly, Annie, you are much to blame—you are indeed the spoiled child of indulgence: you will, I fear, think me unkind and severe with you; but pray consider, before it becomes more serious in regard to your happiness: frequent disagreements are dan-

gerous; be reconciled to your lover, and do not again give way to such petulance; you must learn to bear reproof sometimes; Annandale would not, I am certain, attempt to reprove you but with mildness, and when he thought, in duty and affection, he ought to point out your faults."

Annie burst into tears, and declared that every one seemed set against her, for even her dear Cecilia blamed her, and would not take her part.

Mrs. Tremayne observed, that her niece had only spoken her real sentiments from motives of kindness; that she was not angry with her, but only wished to convince her she had been to blame, as the first step towards a reconciliation with lord Annandale.—“Cecilia is too much your friend to reprove merely for the sake of doing so. Come, get on your bonnet, Annie, and walk home with us, and we will talk over this business again, if you wish it, and see if we cannot persuade you to believe it is yet in your power to be as happy as ever, if you please.”

After some persuasion, Annie complied, and went with her and Cecilia to Mr. Hamilton's; he and Edward were both out, to the great relief of Annie, who dreaded to meet her uncle, but most of all, doctor Ellerslie; as to lord Annandale, she declared she would not see him for some time, if ever again, she was so displeased with him.

"And what is one of the accusations he brings against you?" said Cecilia; "let me hear one at least, and then I shall be better able to judge if he has been so very unreasonable as you appear to think him."

"It is a mere trifle, I assure you, that was the immediate cause of our quarrel—because I went to a ball last Sunday given at madame le Brun's, after I had told him I would not. Annandale had begged me to be as seldom as possible at her house, or in her company; he thinks her a very depraved bad character—though she is so very agreeable, he dislikes her exceedingly: but what was the worst of all, and shocked the precise old doctor the most,

was, that I should have gone on a *Sunday*; he is very particular, and has such odd old-fashioned notions, he is not like the rest of the world. Well, to please them both, I gave my word I would never again go to a ball or a play on a *Sunday*: Annandale would do no such thing himself, I know, but he is something like his friend, rather too precise. He left me quite delighted at the promise he had gained, but Victoire afterwards persuaded me it was very ridiculous to stay away from such a charming ball, only to gratify his whims and caprice; so I went with her and lady Harriet, and danced and waltzed, as ill-luck would have it, with Ulyse de Belinont; you may have heard Annandale speak of him—he says he is quite a free-thinker, and a libertine in conduct, though so young; so strangely prejudiced is he against the poor youth, whom I know nothing of but that he is excessively handsome, and dances delightfully, and that is all I care for in a partner at a ball."

" But you are engaged, Annie, you

should remember, and for that reason should be more than commonly particular not to receive the attentions of every young man who may study to make himself agreeable to you : how could you be so imprudent as to dance with one whose character you knew so well, and that was so much disliked by your lover ?" said Mrs. Tremayne.

" What signifies, as lady Harriet says, the character of a partner at a ball ? If he dances well, and is a good figure, that is every thing."

" My dear Annie, you are wrong, indeed you are. Surely such a character as you describe De Belmont to be, should ever be avoided ; in a small town like this too, you cannot, as you would in Paris, meet him again, and appear as if unacquainted with him ; here, where there are comparatively but few families, each individual is known to the other, and the meeting at a party frequently is the commencement of an acquaintance. De Belmont is the very man most likely to take advan-

tage of such an opportunity ; he will contrive to introduce himself at your father's, if he possibly can, and will distress you by his particular attentions, perhaps not from any admiration of yourself, but to gratify his own vanity in effecting a disagreement between you and the man he knows you are engaged to. Now remember—I caution you to be on your guard not to countenance him with your approbation ; nor behave with pointed rudeness, but treat him, should he intrude himself on your notice, with distant politeness."

Annie readily promised to be more circumspect in her conduct for the future.—“ You talk just like lord Annandale,” said she ; “ for when he found I had been at the ball, he reasoned very seriously with me, much to the same purpose ; he was exceedingly hurt at my breaking my word with him—I resented his reproving me, and told him I was my own mistress, and would do as I pleased. We parted in mutual displeasure, and I have been cool and distant to him ever since, to punish him.”

"Really, Annie, I never thought you could have acted so foolishly," said Cecilia. "I am more vexed with you than ever. You have indeed used Annandale extremely ill, and till you consent to be reconciled to him, and own you have been in the wrong, I will not forgive you," said she, very seriously, as if displeased with her cousin.

Annie perceiving this, and really grieved at her own misconduct, promised to be guided by Cecilia, if she would bring about a reconciliation with Annandale, as she could not herself think of making the first advances, though she was willing to own she had been in the wrong, and determined to be more prudent for the future.

Lady Harriet had, as Cecilia imagined, purposely persuaded Annie to go with her to the ball, in hopes it would cause a disagreement between her and Annandale. She had, after having succeeded in this design, done all in her power to prevent a reconciliation; and when she left the

unhappy girl at home, however reluctant she was to do so, still she did not imagine Annie would attempt to go to Mr. Hamilton's, knowing she feared his censure for her misconduct. Most fortunately for her cousin, Cecilia happened to call on her, and convinced her, like a true friend, of the errors she had been guilty of, and then determined to effect a reconciliation between her and her lover.

As Cecilia was engaged in consoling the afflicted and repentant Annie, Mr. Hamilton and Edward returned from their walk. The former received his niece with unusual coldness of manner, which after the first few minutes rather relaxed into something of his former friendly and affectionate deportment; he conversed on indifferent subjects with his family, but there was still so much reserve in his look and speech when he addressed Annie, that it was plain she had incurred his very serious displeasure: he did not in any manner allude to her late conduct, but she was too conscious of her own perverse folly

not to be certain as to the cause of his anger. Unable to bear the chilling reserve with which her uncle treated her, Annie, with tears in her eyes, besought her cousin to intercede in her behalf, and in a low whisper entreated she might leave them for a short time, while Cecilia should represent to Mr. Hamilton the sorrow she felt for what had passed, and her anxiety to obtain his forgiveness.

Cecilia most willingly acceded to her cousin's proposal—she saw that Annie disliked to explain her sentiments to her uncle while Edward was present. Annie retired to Cecilia's apartment, where she waited in tearful suspense till her cousin came to tell her that Edward was gone out, and Mr. Hamilton wished to see her. He was willing, he said, to forgive her, provided she determined to keep her promise of amendment; but that she had never before so seriously incurred his displeasure.

Annie's affectionate heart felt lightened of a heavy burden, when assured that her

uncle was willing to receive her into favour again; she was once more comparatively happy, for she dreaded more the displeasure of Mr. Hamilton than that of her father—she loved and esteemed both, but her uncle she had ever considered with the most deference.

Cecilia, ever kind and considerate, had, unknown to her cousin, sent Edward to prevail on Annandale to spend the evening with him, but not to say Annie was with them; she made no doubt he would be at the hotel, and unengaged, for his spirits had been so much depressed since his disagreement with his fair mistress, that he had not accepted any invitations to the gay parties where he had been accustomed to meet her.

Cecilia was right in her conjecture; Edward found lord Annandale at the hotel, and as he owned he had not any particular engagement for that evening, he could not well resist the earnest entreaties of his friend—he consented to accompany him to Mr. Hamilton's, whither he returned

with Edward, to the great surprise and confusion of Annie, who stood abashed and unable to look up as he approached her. Perceiving her embarrassment, so different from the proud resentment with which she had lately received him, Annandale felt all his displeasure vanish instantly; and addressing her with all his former affection and respect, inquired after her health with evident anxiety, for her late vexation had really made her look pale and ill—her eyelids still retained the appearance of having been lately suffused with tears. To see the traces of grief on her beautiful features, perhaps occasioned by his reproof, was more than the generous heart of Annandale could bear unmoved; he ardently wished to converse with her alone, and, if possible, obtain a reconciliation; he had, he feared, been too harsh in his expressions of displeasure, irritated as he was at the time, at her having given encouragement to the attentions of De Belmont, after he had told her the real character of that young libertine.

. When Edward left them, the anxious lover entreated Mr. Hamilton to mediate between him and Annie, whom he had unintentionally offended; to spare her feelings, he would not enter into particulars, and he generously sought to take all the blame to himself of their late quarrel, by saying he had been too hasty in his temper, and had not spoken, he feared, with the tenderness he ought to censure her with, even if she had deserved his reproaches.

By the time that Edward returned, happiness and unanimity were again restored to the whole party. Cecilia, in beholding her dear Annie reconciled to her lover, felt amply rewarded for all her late care and solicitude to serve her cousin; she had only to hope the Bironvilles would remain at Lyons, to complete the tranquillity which she now enjoyed, together with every one of her beloved relatives; she dreaded, for various reasons, the return of Eugene, both on the account of Annie and of Edward; she made no doubt the

count would endeavour to rival Annandale in the heart of her cousin, and his sister and lady Harriet were too much in his interest not to take advantage of every slight disagreement that might again occur, similar to that which had so recently taken place. Annie, she saw, was in great danger of being improperly influenced in her conduct; and so disinterested and firm was her affection for that unfortunate girl, that to place her again in safety at Dunethvin, she was willing to sacrifice any proposed gratification of her own, however great, and would gladly have given up all idea of the intended visit to Paris, much as she wished to see it, and share in the gaieties and amusements of that capital.

Secluded as Cecilia had hitherto been, it was an event of no small importance in her quiet life to look forward to. She was young, and had all the ardent and sanguine expectations of pleasure from this excursion that the lively imagination of an intelligent female could form; she looked forward to it as a fund of future amuse-

ment, when again returned to the cottage at Wyecliffe, and the friendly society of Emily Carisford, who from her lips would receive with delight the description of what she had seen most worthy of notice. All this being considered, the sacrifice Cecilia was ready to make for the sake of her cousin was not of a very trifling nature; yet she earnestly entreated her father, in case the Bironvilles were likely to break the engagement between Annie and her lover, that he would write immediately to sir Ronald, to request her immediate return with them to England: lady Harriet could not then have the excuse she had before urged to detain her young companion—if Mr. Hamilton or his family feared no danger to themselves, it was equally safe for Annie, she must allow. Cecilia urged this the more, as she considered her own anxiety to serve her cousin a duty she owed her departed mother—she was thus obeying her dying requests: this consideration determined the conduct

of our heroine, independent of her sincere attachment to Annie..

Mr. Hamilton, on the evening already mentioned, took his niece aside from the rest of the party when she was about to return home, and reminded her, in the most impressive manner, of her promise to regard the duties of the Sabbath, and not on any account, he urged, should she be induced again to break its holy ordinances, by consenting to accompany lady Harriet or Victoire to the ball, plays, and other places of amusement, as they had before too frequently prevailed on her to do: if *they* were ignorant of what they owed to God and his commands, or wilfully persisted in error, *she* had been early instructed in her duty, and ought not to suffer their example to mislead her. He reminded Annie of her promise to attend the hour of family worship at his house the following Sunday, as she could not have the advantage of regular church service as in England. He then gave her, as a token of his entire forgiveness, a small book, which he begged

she would attentively peruse at her leisure. Fondly embracing her, he piously invoked a blessing on his adopted child. Annie's affectionate heart acknowledged all his goodness to her with the sincerest gratitude; she promised to obey the injunctions her uncle had given her, however she might be dissuaded from doing so by her companions.

Mr. Hamilton had ever been scrupulous in observing the duties of the Sabbath; and knowing how prone the mind is to fall into neglect of them, when in a foreign country, of a different persuasion, he had, from his first arrival in France, himself regularly read to his family the service for the day, and with all the sincere unaffected piety of a Christian, offered up his prayers and thanksgivings to the throne of the Almighty.

After the arrival of lord Annandale, his worthy friend doctor Ellerslie officiated as pastor to this little flock. Mr. Hamilton had frequently urged his niece to attend

them in this observance of religious duty, as she had no means of attending public worship, there being no Protestant church where they then were, and religion, he well knew, had no votaries in the family of colonel Campbell—Annic had in her father's house not one good example set her in this respect; on the contrary, every thing there practised tended rather to pervert than remind her of any notions of duty that had been impressed on her youthful mind by sir Ronald and Mrs. Berwick; she had now unfortunately come among those who acted in direct contradiction to all she had been taught as her duty. This alone too powerfully tended to subvert every virtuous principle in one so young and inexperienced: to her slight observation on this subject, it was evident that a deviation from what religion inculcated was not regarded in the eye of the world, though the small still voice of conscience might whisper that it could not escape the penetrating eye of Him who judges from the heart alone. But the hur-

ry of dissipation and life of folly allowed but little time for reflection—Annie found her scruples treated with ridicule and contempt; and what young mind is there, that can always stand firm against “the world’s dread laugh,” with steady perseverance?

Annie gradually yielded to the evil persuasions of those around her, and had, in a few months’ absence from home, learnt to disregard the day hallowed by the Lord himself, and to spend it in the same pursuit of vain pleasure as every other day; for in France the gayest balls, plays, and other public and private parties of pleasure and amusement, are attended on the Sunday, after mass, for there, with that service, end the duties of the Sabbath—the remainder of the day is by all ranks of people given up to gaiety and festivity. In all Catholic countries this custom prevails; but they, considering it no actual sin, err not so much as those Protestants who, professing a stricter and purer faith, are conscious that they are acting contrary to the

express will of their Creator, when they adopt the same erroneous practice: youth, and consequent pliability of temper, may induce some to comply, but they should be warned by their more experienced guardians against such temptations, and reflect, before they act, what compunction and sorrow they will one day feel for having so wantonly disobeyed the mandates of their God.

Mr. Hamilton was the watchful guardian of his niece, as far as circumstances would admit: he saw with pain how much she was borne away by the ill example of lady Harriet; and anxiously wished to stop her progress in the career of folly. Annie's ductile mind and docile temper were well adapted to receive his injunctions; she retired to her own apartment on finding the rest of the family had not yet returned from their evening party at the house of madame le Brun, and taking up the little present she had lately received from her uncle, began very seriously to peruse it, with more attention than was

customary for one of her volatile and trifling disposition to bestow on a subject so important; but to many dry and uninteresting; the duties of the Sabbath-day were inculcated in this little volume with the plain sincerity of unvarnished truth, which aided its influence on the mind of an unprejudiced reader.

Annie read the awful injunction to "remember her Creator in the days of her youth," which prefaced the work she was perusing, with heartfelt remorse, when she considered how frequently and how unthinkingly she had profaned the day set apart by the law of God for prayer and humble devotion, by spending it in the midst of gaiety and folly. On turning to the blank leaf before the titlepage, she perceived a text from scripture, exhorting to godliness and early piety, which had been there written by her aunt, Mrs. Hamilton, who had intended the book as a bequest to her niece, and purposely for her selected the impressive passage which now attracted the attention of Annie: the

well-known handwriting recalled to the mind of that amiable girl the angelic piety of her aunt, who had so often pointed out that passage in Holy Writ, and endeavoured to impress it on her infant mind.

Melted into tears by these reflections, Annie again and again repeated over the well-remembered words; she imprinted a kiss of gratitude and reverence on the characters traced by the hand of her who had left her for another and a better world, but who, by this last proof of her affection, seemed designed by Providence to save her from the path of error: in a meek and humble spirit, Annie threw herself on her knees, and following the simple but beautiful prayer contained in her book, she raised her voice in pious supplication to the Almighty, for his grace to strengthen and support her.

When lady Harriet and Victoire returned, they were not a little surprised and chagrined to hear she had been at Mr. Hamilton's; they wished to make her tell all that passed, particularly with lord

Annandale, and if she were reconciled to him; they earnestly endeavoured to prove she was too forgiving—that he would make her miserable, if she consented to consult his opinion and will, instead of her own—it was indeed too ridiculous to be thus tutored by her uncle and her lover both.

To these remarks Annie said but little: convinced she had acted rightly, she was resolved not to be laughed out of a good resolution, and for once she was firm in her decision. Assuring her insidious friends that she loved and respected her uncle for his anxious wish for her happiness, she begged to have no more said on the subject, and pleaded weariness and want of rest as an excuse for withdrawing from their company so early that night.

For some time Annie was influenced by the good example and advice of Cecilia, constantly avoiding any engagements on the Sunday, except that of being at her uncle's, and joining with his family in the prayers of the day.

Delighted with this change in her conduct, Mr. Hamilton wrote to sir Ronald, informing him of it, and that he hoped his darling girl, as the old man called Annie, would escape the contagion of vice, and that he might restore her to him as amiable and as lovely as when she left the seclued towers of Dunethvin.

The venerable laird, comforted by this intelligence, could more calmly endure the long absence of his child. In the joy of his heart he shewed lady Annandale Hamilton's letter, in which he mentioned Annie in the highest terms of fondness and admiration; the good sir Ronald already considered her ladyship as the mother of his beloved Annie, and concluded that every thing to her advantage must interest and gratify his worthy friend.

Lady Annandale participated most sincerely in his joy, and told him of her intention to visit Paris in the ensuing spring, and of her son's wish for her to take charge of her daughter, as he delighted to style Annie, on her way home; this she had

readily agreed to, and had written to them both, expressing her impatience to receive them once more to her maternal embrace.

Day after day had for some time glided away in happiness and satisfaction to all parties, except lady Harriet and her Parisian friends, who deeply regretted the influence of the Hamiltons over their own intended victim ; they yet determined to spare no means again to ensnare her, and, if possible, get her entirely from them ; but this was a difficult task, as both families were going to Paris together, and to remain there till Annie should return to her grandfather and guardian, sir Ronald Campbell.

Lady Harriet advised madame de Bironville and her son to come immediately to Dinan—in the meantime, she would create a coolness between lord Annandale and his intended bride. But in that attempt her ladyship was foiled by the vigilance and affection of Cecilia, assisted by Edward, who entered as an active and ready partizan, in the cause of one so dear

to his cousin; added to this, he greatly esteemed Annandale, and resolved to serve him to the utmost of his power.—It may not be improper here to inform the reader how far Edward Tremayne had succeeded, in inclining his uncle to sanction, by his consent, the affection and engagement subsisting between him and Cecilia, who had, from the first declaration of his love, referred her acceptance of his addresses to the opinion and decision of her father, in full confidence that should he deem her union with her cousin consistent with her prospects of real happiness, he would not refuse his consent. In this belief she was not mistaken: Mr. Hamilton had with pleasure observed the attachment of Edward to Cecilia, which had been long apparent to him, even before his nephew had entreated him to grant his consent to their mutual engagement. This was not altogether refused by Mr. Hamilton, though he then thought proper to grant it on certain conditions only; he did not fail to remind Edward of the very small portion

he should be enabled to bestow on his daughter, and the little share of property he possessed in *reality*, however great his *expectations* might be; the latter, in the chances of this variable world, was not to be relied on as a certainty.—“I will give my consent on one condition, my dear Edward,” said he, “and that is, if your uncle, sir William Tremayne, does not disapprove of the choice you have made: unless he approves of it, Cecilia must never be yours—I will not suffer her to be the means of marring your future fortune; sir William has declared you his heir, and may, if you marry contrary to his wishes, disinherit you—obtain his consent, and I shall with parental affection receive you as my son.”

Edward in vain urged that he could not have an answer from sir William in much less than a year, as he was still in India; he remonstrated against this appeal to his uncle, alleging that he had a right to choose for himself, independent of all mercenary considerations; Cecilia was, and

would ever be, the sole object of his choice.'

Mr. Hamilton was firm in what he had determined was the conduct he should adopt; but he assured the impatient lover that he feared no opposition on the part of sir William, but he thought it would not be right for Edward to enter into so important an engagement without first consulting his uncle and benefactor, who looked on him as the future head of the ancient family of Tremayne.

This Edward could not deny, and was therefore compelled to submit, however reluctantly, to the conditions Mr. Hamilton had enjoined ; he took the earliest opportunity of sending a letter to sir William, beseeching he would, immediately on receiving it, write back his decision, on which would depend the future happiness or misery of the life of his nephew.

Mr. Hamilton, in addressing sir William on the same subject, did not fail to explain his motives for having refused an entire consent till his opinion should be

known. Edward, he said, had been placed under his guardianship, and he was anxious to fulfil the trust reposed in him, independent of all selfish views; he would not consent to the marriage of his nephew with Cecilia, if it were likely to injure the future prospects of that deserving young man, otherwise he should have been proud to have called him his son, both on account of his amiable disposition, and the manner in which he had already distinguished himself in his profession.

Edward had not been long resident in his uncle's family, before he was convinced how impossible it was to maintain his former resolution; he could not daily behold Cecilia without betraying his love for her; the firmness with which, at a distance, he was enabled to act, now forsook him in her presence; the secret he had so long endeavoured to conceal was already known—she must have observed the enthusiastic love and admiration which she had inspired him with; she did not, he argued to himself, appear to receive his attentions

with total indifference, yet he feared to flatter himself by these sanguine hopes, as his whole future happiness depended on Cecilia's acceptance of him; all the riches of the world would in his estimation be but of little value, unless she consented to share them with him.

Cecilia was, as he imagined, conscious of her influence in his heart, and had not observed it with indifference; she at length accepted his vows of eternal love and fidelity, conditionally, referring her lover to the opinion and will of her father, by whom only she could be guided in her acceptance or rejection of her cousin.

The result of this application to Mr. Hamilton the reader is already acquainted with—the consent of sir William must yet be obtained before Edward could claim his fair cousin as his bride; in the time that must intervene ere that could take place, our hero was to be considered as the accepted lover of Cecilia.

Mrs. Tremayne, who had long hoped that truly amiable girl would one day be-

come the wife of her beloved Edward, now looked forward with fond solicitude to that happy event; the happiness of her son was the bright hope of her declining age; the duty and affection of Edward had been her consolation under the most severe affliction; when deprived of her lamented husband, the blessing of having such a child had enabled her to support the loss of his deceased parent.

Cecilia, in her letter to Emily Carisford, had confided to her the secret of her heart—her engagement to Edward, whom she represented as all her most sanguine hope could expect in the man who was to become her husband; with fond delight she dwelt on this theme—expatiated on the excellence of his disposition, and his firm and unbounded affection.

“Alas!” sighed the unhappy Emily, as she read her friend’s encomium on her lover, “he needs no advocate with me; I have been but too sensible of his superior excellence—I have long dwelt on his character with unbounded admiration; but I

must now strive to banish all thoughts of Edward from my mind. Cecilia little imagines the pain she has caused me by making me her confidant—but I only am to blame. Why did I ever give ear to the foolish tale that I was the object of his boyish love? or how could I flatter myself with the hope that his affection would remain unchanged? Cecilia is more worthy of Edward than I could ever hope to be, but that dear friend shall not have her fair promise of happiness shaded with unavailing regret for having, though unconsciously, embittered my cup with disappointment and humiliation. No, Cecilia shall never know of my love for Edward—she shall not have the most distant idea that she has been my rival in his heart; to my own anguished breast will I henceforward confine this disgraceful secret of my weakness, and fond misjudging credulity. Oh, Cecilia! my friend, my earliest, dearest friend! you have robbed me of that heart which I madly hoped was devoted to me."

With tears of bitter grief, the unhappy Emily again deeply lamented her folly in believing, what she had been always told from a child; that she was beloved by Edward; yet so well did she contend with the wounded feelings of her agonized heart—so well did she conceal her secret grief, that not even her anxious parents suspected the real cause of her declining health; they little knew their beloved child was then a prey to silent sorrow—that corroding care and bitter disappointment were wasting her once-blooming form, and gradually undermining her constitution.

CHAPTER V.

MR. Hamilton and his family were all assembled at colonel Campbell's, when lady Harriet, as if casually, mentioned the intended arrival of the count and madame de Bironville, on the following day, from

Lyons.—“They will be a very agreeable addition to our family circle,” said she, anxious to know how the intelligence she had given concerning them would be received by her visitors then present. Perceiving they made no comment whatever alluding to the Bironvilles, she artfully added, in a mournful tone of commiseration—“Bironville is, I think, much to be pitied: his character, I hear, has been most cruelly traduced, owing to the unfortunate circumstance of his great resemblance to his cousin, Camille de Bironville. Many people, mistaking the count for that young man, have attributed to him the crimes and vices which Camille has, I fear, been really guilty of; he was a most depraved character, very different from our amiable Eugene, who, unjustly, is now compelled to endure the disgrace and contempt which his cousin brought upon the name of Bironville.”

“I believe,” said Edward, sarcastically, “disgrace has long been an appendage to their family and name, and the present

branch of it are likely to maintain the *honourable* distinction *undiminished*."

The bitter tone of irony in which this remark was made for a moment daunted even lady Harriet herself; adept as she was in disguising her feelings, she was now evidently embarrassed, and hesitated what to urge in defence of her friends the Bironvilles.

Mrs. Tremayne and Cecilia looked anxiously towards Edward, in hope to catch his attention, and warn him not to be so hasty and unguarded in his remarks on the count or his relatives—fortunately, Victoire was not present: a dead silence ensued, which was at length broken by lady Harriet, who, wishing to appear ignorant of Edward's motive for being so severe on the name of Bironville, entered warmly on the praises of the count; she concluded by explaining most plausibly every circumstance respecting him and Camille, the cousin of Eugene.—“It has, I assure you, caused much affliction to madame de Bironville, and my dear friend

Victoire," said her ladyship; " indeed the poor girl has for some time been almost inconsolable on his account, for she is dotingly fond of her brother; I cannot tell what she would have done if she had not had Annie to console her—Annie, my love, do go and see for your poor unhappy friend; I fear she is alone, and fretting again about this sad business—she was sadly out of spirits yesterday."

" Mademoiselle de Bironville has, I think, in general, a great share of her national vivacity," observed Edward.

At that moment, rather *mal-à-propos* to what lady Harriet had asserted of her friend, she made her appearance, evidently decked out for conquest; for the vain and weak mind of Victoire yet hoped to rival Cecilia, and did not despair of attracting the admiration of Edward. She swam into the room with the air and silly affectation of one who believes herself irresistible: placing herself between Mrs. Tre-mayne and Cecilia, she immediately engaged them in an animated conversation

on the subject of the approaching anniversary of St. Cecilia's day ; she paid many elegant well-turned compliments to our heroine, who bore the name of that saint. Victoire was determined to make herself agreeable to the Hamiltons : she had for some time past endeavoured to ingratiate herself with Mrs. Tremayne and her niece in particular ; she made it her study to please them, declaring frequently she had never spent her time so delightfully as in their company, and that of her little favourite, meaning Annie Campbell ; she complimented Edward, and conversed with lord Annandale respecting Edinburgh—she evidently strove to flatter and fascinate by her agreeable manners : the *dejection of spirits*, under which *she had recently suffered*, could not be traced either in her look or manner—her conversation was even more than usually gay and entertaining.

As the ladies were amusing themselves with playing some new and fashionable songs that Annie had just received from

Paris, Cecilia happened to mention the Spanish ballads which Edward had brought her. Upon hearing he was the person who had made the selection, Victoire was impatient to see some of the songs. Cecilia and Annie readily proposed going to fetch them, and, attended by lord Anmandale and Edward, they went immediately to Mr. Hamilton's lodgings. Unwilling as mademoiselle de Bironville was to suffer them to go, unless she had been to accompany them, she reluctantly saw the two gentlemen depart, and leave her without one gallant beau to flirt and trifle with. The plain simple reader may well ask, why did she remain? What could possibly prevent her accompanying them so short a distance? The reason then was simply this—Victoire was fearful of discomposing her superlatively elegant dress, which was undoubtedly not very well calculated for walking, and that day she had bestowed uncommon care in adorning herself to the very extreme of the mode; as I said before, she was armed for conquest.

As her companions arrived at monsieur le Tour's, and had ascended the dark narrow staircase leading to the apartments appropriated to Mr. Hamilton, and had entered the small anti-room, the first object that presented itself was indeed truly ludicrous, and no other than old Morgan, who not expecting them to be home till night, had taken advantage of their absence to have the rooms newly waxed and polished: he was, at the moment they appeared, pacing the floor in a kind of capering step, rubbing his hands, and laughing in high glee. As Cecilia and her companions advanced unobserved, they saw Nanon standing at the door of the dining-room with a bottle and glass, which she was filling with brandy for one of the men employed, as they afterwards found, in scrubbing the room, and with whom she was chatting and laughing incessantly. Both the men were *apparently* engaged in *dancing* about the floor with their arms placed a-kimbo, and so heartily did they

foot it away, that the perspiration rolled in large drops down their hard and swarthy faces.

Cecilia, at a loss to imagine what all the bustle meant, was going to inquire of Morgan what business those men had in her father's part of the house. Annie, unable longer to control her mirth, laughed aloud, which made the old man, who had not before observed their approach, turn towards them. He looked rather confused at first, but as he saw there were only the young people, he recovered himself sufficiently to explain the very extraordinary scene before them, by saying, in his usual circuitous manner—"Why, ma'am, seeing you were all out for the whole day, I persuaded the people of the house to send for somebody to scrub the board's a bit, thinking they looked rather dirty or so; and up there comes these two great fellows, and strapping on the scrubbing-brushes to their feet, instead of using them with their hands, as any other folks would, they began dancing away with all

their might and main, till they were both ready to drop down, for I assure you they have worked as hard as horses at it this ever so long; so I, ma'am, thinking they never could get through with the job in time, made Nanon ask madame le Tour for a glass of brandy for the poor souls, and they have got on a world the better for it—we shall have it all as nice as my nail again his honour and madam come home; but it was very comical like to watch these two fellows, and I was just trying what I could make of it after their fashion, when you came in."

Cecilia smiled at this explanatory speech, and highly pleased old Morgan by commending his diligence in the absence of his master. She stepped lightly along the highly waxed floor, and having found the music-book, was returning to the anti-room, when the two men sat down very deliberately, and taking off the brushes from their feet, strapped on others of a different kind. Curious to know the mean-

ing of this, she asked why they could not finish with those she had before seen them wear?

The men very civilly explained, that the first were for waxing, and those they then had on were for polishing the boards : proud to shew their skill and dexterity in their business, they now both began dancing away with redoubled energy.

Annie, diverted beyond measure with the novelty of the employment, declared she would have a set of brushes made to fit her feet, and when she should return to Dunethvin, and wanted amusement, she would set about scrubbing the large old hall at the castle in the same way.

When they rejoined the rest of the party at her father's, while Cecilia and Victoire were trying the harp, she danc'd into the middle of the saloon, and setting her arms and figure in the exact attitude of the men she had just seen, began to scrub and dance away as they did, to the astonishment of all who had not witnessed the scene at the house of monsieur le Tour.

"My dear love, what new *pas scul* is that?" said lady Harriet, laughing at the odd conceit of Annie.

"What freak is this? where did you learn that step, Annie?" said colonel Campbell. "Come, Cecilia, strike up some lively air that will suit this *elegant* dance that Annie intends to favour us with: perhaps, my lord, you will have no objection to join her," added he, laughingly, seeing lord Annandale enjoying her frolic nearly as much as herself.

"My lord has been taking a lesson as well as Annie," said Edward; "I make no doubt he will accomplish that difficult and very *graceful* step that she is now dancing."

"And for the same reason, Tremayne, you and Cecilia may hope to excel—we shall make a charming ballet of it," said lord Annandale; "will you try?" added he.

Doctor Ellerslie very seriously asked if they were all mad?—"If not," said he, "I should like to know who is your mas-

ter—I have some idea of taking a few lessons myself; it would be exceedingly good exercise for me in the winter," said he, with pretended gravity.

This remark from the good-natured doctor added to the mirth of the company. Annie could no longer continue her dance, the very idea of his attempting to foot it away as she had done, so extremely diverted her fancy. She then related the droll scene she had witnessed at monsieur le Tour's, with all the wit and vivacity imaginable: her friends were all nearly as much amused as herself at the description she gave of this new method of polishing floors.

"I know not how it is," said Mr. Hamilton, "but Morgan meets with the strangest adventures I ever heard of: he is indeed quite an oddity himself, but so truly worthy and faithful, that I willingly reconcile myself to all his peculiarity of manner, in consideration of his merits in other respects; for this reason I brought him with us from England, in preference

to a more modish valet; he is so attached to every member of my family, that he would be miserable at the thought of quitting my service; nor could I in justice, after upwards of twenty years of faithful servitude, dismiss the old man."

"I assure you, Hamilton, you are in the right to prize such a servant as Morgan—he is worth half the pert insolent coxcombs who call themselves your servants, while they seek to be in reality your masters. I could not endure a French valet; I have my own man, Jervis, who was with me in India when I first went out. There is, as some justly urge, an inconvenience in having English servants, as they seldom understand the language of this country, but they somehow contrive to get over that difficulty pretty soon; and I must own, I think, upon principle, we should give a preference to natives of our own country, now that so many poor creatures are totally out of employ—many among them servants discarded on account of the families they had served going to reside

abroad; theirs is really a most deplorable situation. If people will be fools enough to throw their money away in France, to the injury of their own country, they should make it a point of conscience to provide as far as possible for the dependants who had served them in England, before they engage foreigners for that purpose. I shall, for my own part, be heartily glad to see my native land again, and behold good honest English faces near me; I never was partial to French foppery and grimace."

From the hearty sincerity with which Angus Campbell's feelings accorded with his words, he quite forgot that a native of the country he was speaking of was then present, and could, though her knowledge of English was but slight, make out sufficient of his conversation to know he disliked her countrymen in general, of whatever rank they might be: his wish to quit France so soon was certainly equivalent to this declaration. But Victoire was either unconscious of the rudeness of the colonel's

unguarded remark, or was too much on her guard to appear to have noticed it; she was before this well aware of his dislike to her family, and that it was only in compliance to his wife's wishes that he invited them to be of his family party.

Lady Harriet now purposely endeavoured to engage the attention of her Parisian friend.—“Victoire, will you not favour us with a song?” said her ladyship: “do sing that charming air Moldetti sent you, or one of your brother’s Spanish songs,” said she, in a voice of winning kindness and entreaty; but Victoire, unusually diffident, could not be prevailed on to try either.

Cecilia and Annie accompanied each other through several very beautiful pieces with great skill and melody; Annandale and Edward listened with fond delight and admiration, while the blended notes of their harmonious voices rose to the ear with heavenly sweetness.

Victoire, with haughty disdain and sul-

len envy, beheld the silent, but unbounded admiration of the two gentlemen, in the expressive countenances of both, as they gazed enraptured on the lovely cousins; her proud heart, bursting with ill-concealed malice, throbbed with vindictive rage, yet she determined she would one day triumph—she would yet mar the happiness of her fair rivals. Such were the thoughts of mademoiselle de Bironville, as she contemplated the happy group near her. “Hell has no fury like a woman scorned,” might very justly have been said of her at that moment, could all the black passions of her guilty soul have been laid open to her unsuspecting companions; yet so well did she dissemble her rage, that she was even the loudest in her plaudits when the music ceased, and the whole party expressed their approbation of the performance in the most flattering terms of admiration.

Lady Harriet next placed herself at the harp, an instrument peculiarly calculated to shew off a fine figure to advantage; and

her ladyship did not fail to assume the most graceful attitude imaginable on this occasion. She played and sung with wonderful skill and execution : colonel Campbell was enchanted—but whether it was that the young men were deficient just then in *taste* or not, they certainly did not listen with the same delight and admiration to the clear fine tones of lady Harriet's voice, as they had before done to the sweet and wildly plaintive notes of Cecilia and Annie : to the lover and the musician must be referred this dubious point, and to the decision of the *former* the author prefers leaving it, convinced *they can best* appreciate the real motive.

Before the Hamiltons returned home, Cecilia and Annie engaged to meet again the following evening, at a party given by one of their acquaintance in the town, the next at a fete, and so on—Annie would have engaged her cousin for the whole week at least, could she have prevailed on her to accept of all the invitations she had to give her.—“ Dear Cecilia,” said she,

"you must go—I will take no excuse," said the lively girl; "every one will be leaving this place soon for Rennes, and other great towns; it is now very late in the season—I trust we shall not be here much longer, but take our departure for that delight of all delights, Paris. We shall stay but a few days at Rennes, I hope; my father, indeed, did say for several weeks, but I and lady Harriet will persuade him to leave it much sooner than he now intends—I long to be at Paris, for I have but a few months to stay in France, and I should like to devote the whole of that time to Parisian gaiety."

"It is a week since we were at colonel Campbell's, I think," said Cecilia to her aunt: "to-morrow is the twenty-second of November, is it not?"

"Yes, my love," replied Mrs. Tremayne; "but why do you so particularly inquire? do you expect any visitors on that day?"

"Oh no! but it is Saint Cecilia's day. Annie tells me it is quite a grand day here: the young men of genteel rank, that is, the *noblesse*, assemble at night and se-

renade their friends or acquaintance—but here is my cousin, she can inform you better than I can."

"They are come—they are come! the Bironvilles are arrived! we have been expecting them this week," said Annie; "they are come at last, and I really think Eugene looks handsomer than ever. I left him and his mother in lady Harriet's room, for she was not up when they came—it is very late too, but she was quite fatigued with a large party last night. I have this moment made my escape, just to run and tell you the count and madame are come, but I must be off directly, or it will appear as if I wished to avoid them. I make no doubt I shall find them still with lady Harriet; they were in very earnest conversation as I left them."

"And did you say she received them in her own room? What, Eugene de Bironville! Impossible! Annie, you must mistake," said Cecilia, in astonishment at what she had heard.

"Dear me! no, it is no mistake: why,

nothing is more common in France—a married woman may do almost whatever she pleases, though the young and unmarried must be more particular: lady Harriet has often adopted this French custom; I assure you, all the ladies we have visited are accustomed to do the same—I could name twenty, at least, that I know in this town. Did you never know this?" said Annie to her cousin, in great surprise.

" I had heard," replied Cecilia, " that *some* of the married ladies in France made no scruple to act as you describe; but I should have thought lady Harriet, as an *Englishwoman*, would not have conformed to this practice."

Mrs. Tremayne was of the same opinion on this subject as her niece, and was not a little astonished to find the custom of admitting male visitors in the bedchambers so general, even among those families from whom she would have expected more delicacy and propriety of conduct.

" When I called on madame le Blanc the other morning," continued Annie, " I

ran up into her room, and there she was, sitting up in her bed, in a kind of loose wrapping-gown, and chatting away with young D'Anville and monsieur le Brun, just with the same *nonchalance* as if she had been in her drawing-room. I started back at seeing the gentlemen, but madame called to me, and made me sit down by her bedside—she laughed heartily at my embarrassment: being a pleasant lively woman, she very much amused me by her witty conversation, but I must say I felt rather surprised at her conduct altogether."

"Does madame de Bironville and the count intend to go with lady Harriet and your father to Paris?" inquired Mrs. Tre-mayne.

"She wishes us to go to Rennes this next week, and then proceed from thence to Paris. I believe the Bironvilles will be of our party to both those places, though much, I suspect, against my father's will, for they are no favourites of his, you know. I do not care how soon we leave Dinan, provided my uncle and you will accom-

pany us: and now I think of it," said Annie, addressing her cousin, " to-morrow is Saint Cecilia's day—we shall be serenaded, I suppose, in the evening. I will, if agreeable, spend the day with you, for my father, lady Harriet, and Victoire, are to be at madame le Brun's concert, and Annandale does not approve of my visiting her; and, besides, I had rather be here, if you will accept of my company. I must now leave you, or Victoire will be quite offended if I stay so long away from her—Adieu, *mes amies.*"

Edward entered, just as Annie had taken her hasty leave of her cousin and aunt.— " So we are to be off to Rennes the latter end of next week," said he; " my uncle and colonel Campbell have fixed the day: we have a hotel engaged for us by the count Bonneval; he has written to say his friend, the count de Fleury, who is now in Paris, wishes to let that part of the Hotel de Fleury which was commonly reserved for the use of himself and family: it is in the Rue Corbin at Rennes, a fine

old building, and very large. Two different families have the other apartments in it, I hear, but they will not interfere with us, or we with them, the hotel is divided into so many complete suites of rooms leading to the grand staircase and entrance. I think we are fortunate in having secured this residence. Colonel Campbell has taken the Hotel de Cognac, a fine old place, but miserably situated—at least the approach to it is deplorable; the view from the windows that overlook the walks by the river is rather pleasant; but I am sorry to find Rennes, which was once a place of so much importance, has been of late so much falling into decay—it is now nothing to what it was before the revolution."

"How has my father been able to arrange every thing so expeditiously?" inquired Cecilia; "he had not heard from the count this morning."

"We both called at the post-office while we were out, and found there a letter for him from Paris, and one for me from London, which, I fear, will oblige me to return

to England immediately. I must leave you for a short time—I cannot see that I can well avoid doing so," said he, with affected composure, but real and deep regret.

"To England!" exclaimed both the ladies, in utter astonishment.

"What can have happened that you should think of leaving us so very unexpectedly, my dear boy?" said Mrs. Tremayne, half doubting what she had just heard.

"Do not alarm yourself, my dear mother; I shall be with you again in a fortnight at farthest; I have taken my uncle's opinion on the business, and he strongly urges the necessity of my going; or had I consulted my own will on this occasion, I should have been inclined to remain where I am, and trust to my friend in town to settle every thing for me, instead of my going to England to see into the cause of my remittances being delayed; but as the sum is considerable for me to lose, who am but a poor soldier at best, my un-

ele will not hear of my putting up with the loss."

" You will not think of going just directly," I hope," said Cecilia, mournfully ; " it has been so stormy lately, I shall dread your crossing the Channel."

" My dear sweet girl, do not fear—there will be no danger ; consider how short a distance it is—a mere nothing. I will not go till I have seen you all settled at Rennes—that is yet a week and more," added he, gazing tenderly on her lovely countenance.

She raised her tearful eyes at that moment, with such a sweet beseeching look, he could not have resolved to leave her immediately, had thousands depended on his doing so.

To change the subject of conversation to one of a less sombre cast, he rallied her on the polite and gallant billets she would no doubt receive from her different acquaintance the next morning, with the bouquets of flowers it is customary to send on such occasions. In France, the reader

may remember, it is usual to present flowers, or some other little presents, to a friend or relation, on the anniversary of the saint's day after whom the person is named.

Mr. Hamilton, on his return, explained every particular respecting the intended removal to Rennes. He gave, as madame de Bonneval commissioned him, her compliments to both the ladies, and to Cecilia many kind messages, among which one was, that Valerie was daily expected in Paris, and, no doubt, had heard of her intended visit, which most likely had determined him to spend the winter there—he was certainly desperately in love.

Cecilia felt half angry with madame de Bonneval, for having said so much to her father on so ridiculous a subject, and that too by means of the count her husband; for it was he who had written to Mr. Hamilton, who was highly amused at seeing how seriously his daughter took up the whole affair, while he regarded it as the mere *bardinage* of the countess; who, he knew, delighted in subjects of that kind to-

exercise her wit on. Giving Cecilia the letter, he bade her see if he had told her one word more than he was desired: still continuing to tease her by referring to what the countess had said, he provokingly added, “you may expect a letter yourself in a short time from her; she has, she says, much to tell you of poor Valerie.”

Cecilia, who feared Edward might misunderstand the message, and take for truth what was meant only in jest, dreaded lest any continued allusions to it might rouse his jealousy and create mischief, should he chance to meet Valerie at Paris, which was not improbable: these fears made her less disposed to join in the jest, particularly as she knew Edward was to leave her so soon—she would not on any account raise any doubts in his mind of her sincerity.

“This Valerie is a great favourite with madame de Bonneval—he has a most strenuous advocate in her. Does she know much of him and his family?” inquired Edward.

"Monsieur Valerie is an intimate acquaintance of the count's, but I think he is not much known to the countess: he is certainly a very agreeable man," said Mr. Hamilton.

Cecilia proposing a walk to La Collinée, or Mont Parnasse, put an end to the conversation for that time respecting Valerie. Both situations she named commanded most beautiful views, but Mrs. Tremayne preferred the latter, because she had heard the history of the rightful owner. His family had been deprived of the house and estate of La Collinée during the revolution; it had been sold for a trifle from one person to another, till it came into the hands of the present possessor, who at this time wished to sell it, but asked more than monsieur Chatillon could afford to pay out of his very moderate income. Mr. Hamilton remembered to have seen him on his coming back to Dinan, after an absence of twenty years—he was a genteel interesting young man of about thirty, and though quite a boy when he left La

Collinée, remembered it as it then was, and sighed with melancholy retrospection of the past, as he lately walked over its decayed terraces and neglected gardens; he contrasted in his mind its former beauty with its present ruinous aspect—with vain regret he deeply lamented his utter inability to recover the possession of his own patrimonial estate.

Whilst Mr. Hamilton and his sister amused themselves in surveying the charming situation of this little domain, Cecilia completed her sketch of the building, in chalk: it was delicately finished, and intended as a present for Emily Carisford. Edward afterwards prevailed on her to relinquish that intention, and let him become the owner of La Collinée in miniature.

The following morning, as Morgan was attending in his master's dressing-room, he appeared as if he had something he very much wished to relate; at length he took courage to address Mr. Hamilton, by saying—“There is to be a fine grand party

to-night at madame le Brun's; she is very gay, and all that, sir, but I am glad Miss Cecilia never visits her—I hope she will persuade Miss Campbell not to go, for all lady Harriet continues to visit at her house; but, I believe, very few of our English like her, sir."

"Why should you think so, Morgan?" said his master.

"Why, sir, they tell such odd stories about her and the new *prefet*, or mayor, or whatever he is—however that is what they call him here; you may have seen him, sir, at monsieur le Blanc's—a handsome-looking man, to my mind, to be sure he is."

"Yes, I remember him very well—I have seen him often lately; but what of him?"

"They do say he is too much in madame le Brun's company, and that she does not care for her husband the value of a *pin*; he is a good kind of man, too, by all account, only does not keep her strict enough. Well, sir, I was going down the

great walks yesterday, and I met *her* and *her* husband together, for a wonder; when up comes the *prefet*, and offers *madame* his arm, and she—what does she do, but lets go her husband's arm, and walks off, leaving him to follow behind them like a fool, as he must be, begging your honour's pardon for speaking my mind so boldly. Well, I said to myself, an Englishman would not be apt to take that treatment quite so easy, but then the women do here just as they please, and that is bad enough, by all account. When you returned from your ride yesterday, did you, sir, see the people looking up at monsieur le Brun's house?"

"No, I did not remark them, Morgan: what was there to attract their attention more than usual?"

"Oh, sir, the poor foolish man has got himself so laughed at, for he must needs have his coat of arms, as they call it, put up over the door of his house, all carved out in stone—three birds all of a row; and

they do say, sir, they are *cuckoos*, of all things in the world for *him* to *choose*; there is the gentlemen's servants laughing ready to kill themselves about it; and well they may, to my mind; so, as I passed by, I just asked lord Annandale's valet, Mr. Mackenzie, what all the bustle meant? and he it was that told me all about it, and he swears they are indeed *cuckoos*, as like as possible. It is a pity the poor man should be so *ridiculous*, says I, but at the same time I could not help laughing at this fancy of his."

"Morgan, you must not repeat all the scandal you hear," said his master—"it is not proper; and as to the whim of having his coat of arms over his door, Mr. le Brun has certainly a right to do so if he pleases, though it may be silly enough. As to the story of the *cuckoos*, depend on it, Morgan, some malicious person first spread the report, with the wish to mortify his pride by making him appear ridiculous, and I would not wish you to assist in the scheme by repeating it."

This was not the first story of the kind that Mr. Hamilton had heard of le Brun, who had literally become, as Morgan said, the laugh of the whole town : the little vanity of displaying so publicly his armorial bearings had drawn on him the contempt and ridicule of the people of Dinan, who had industriously spread the report that Morgan related to his master, and which had afforded himself and the rest of his liveried brethren a most excellent joke, as they thought it, at the expence of monsieur le Brun.

Finding Mr. Hamilton not much disposed to encourage this sort of gossiping, he dropped the subject; but as he very much liked to hear the sound of his own voice, whenever he had it in his power, he began another topic of conversation equally whimsical, by saying—"Your honour was so kind as to let me go with Jervis to the fair or wake yesterday."

"Well, Morgan, did you find any thing there worth seeing?" inquired his mas-

ter, in a good-humoured tone of affability, which greatly encouraged the old man to proceed in his relation of the marvellous, which he so much delighted in; and it must be acknowledged, he had of late had ample field for it, and subjects innumerable, in a land where the customs and manners differed so widely from those of his own country.

"I saw such heaps of people," said he, "all as busy as a swarm of bees in a hot summer's day, sir—some were buying and selling ribbons, toys, lace, and suchlike; but the best fun to me was the cattle fair. I saw there *such* horses! bless your honour, such horses!"

"What, were they such fine horses then?" said Mr. Hamilton.

"Oh no! I believe you would not have said so, had you seen them, sir; they were only fit to be cut up for the dogs—such a poor carrion set of 'em, all skin and bone, like very *notamies*, as a body may say; and these poor sorry beasts they were selling by the pound, at twopence halfpenny a

pound! ‘ And dear enough too,’ says Jervis to me, ‘ for such poor devils, that looked as if all the hags in Christendom had been riding on ‘em.’ — When we were tired of this sport, we went into another part of the fair, among a great crowd of all sorts of folks, gentle and simple, and there what should we see but a whole parcel of women and girls, ranged all along in a row, without a cap or bit of any thing upon their heads, with their long hair all streaming down their backs, looking for all the world like horses’ tails. Well, thinks I, what fancy is this? So presently I heard two or three dirty-looking fellows come and chatter to one, and then to another, all in their French gibberish; so I could not tell what they said, but saw them very deliberately shake one of the women by the hair, and then the next to her. I thought the girls took this rude behaviour mighty quietly—to be sure, they had no business to be standing without their caps. I had half a mind to correct one of the fellows for his impudence, as I

then fancied it, when he, taking out a great pair of scissars from his pocket, took hold of a very pretty girl that I was standing near to, and without more to do, docked her hair off, quite close to her ears, and then giving her some money, which she took with a very good grace, he put the curls up in a bag, and marched off to make another such bargain, while the girl very contentedly put on her cap, and joined a company of dancers that were footing it away just by. Jervis tells me the country girls sell their hair in this manner every year; but to my mind it is a very *undecent* sort of a thing—I would not let my Meg do so, I know.—Why, please your honour, they would not hardly believe such a thing in England—I fear, when I come to tell all I have seen and heard, the good people at Wyecliffe will be apt to think I am *romancing*."

Mr. Hamilton could not forbear smiling at Morgan's description of the French fair, but being now dressed, he dismissed the old man, who was highly gratified by hav-

ing been indulged in relating his curious adventures.

Mrs. Tremayne, Cecilia, and Edward, were all assembled round the breakfast-table, when Mr. Hamilton made his appearance among them. The table was literally strewed with bouquets of beautiful flowers, and small baskets of fruit, the choicest of the kind that the lateness of the season could afford; under each plate lay, neatly folded as a note, and addressed to each individual of the family, a complimentary and elegant charade in verse. Surprised at this unexpected specimen of French gallantry, Mr. Hamilton inquired if it was any particular festival or saint's day?

"My dear brother, you have forgotten, I suppose, that it is the twenty-second of November to-day," said Mrs. Tremayne.

"Now then I understand the meaning of all these unusual decorations—they are as offerings to *Saint Cecilia*," said he, embracing his daughter, "or rather in compliment to her namesake. But what are

the charades about? let me try my skill in unravelling their mysterious meaning."

As he was thus engaged, in came Annie Campbell, who, with her usual enchanting *naïveté* of manner, declared she was come thus early to make her humble offering to her favourite saint. Kneeling in the most graceful attitude to her cousin, she presented her with a small basket of exquisite workmanship, filled with artificial flowers of the rarest beauty, each perfumed with the essence of that particular flower, so well imitated by the hand of art.

Cecilia raised and embraced the fair donor of this little gift, with the liveliest emotions of gratitude and love, for her affectionate and elegant compliment, rendered doubly dear from the well-known sincere attachment of that lovely girl.

" You are to spend the day with us, remember, Annie," said Mrs. Tremayne; " we are to have a concert this evening, and have invited a few friends to join our own domestic circle: lord Annandale is to be of the number," said she, smiling significant-

ly, which rather deepened the hue of rosy health on the cheek of her fair visitor.

"Annie had better stay, now she is with us," said Mr. Hamilton; "we shall then make sure of her company; lady Harriet will know where she is, or we can send Morgan to say she breakfasts with us this morning. Come here, my little fairy, and help me to make out this charade, which has so puzzled us all."

Thus occupied, the happy party were detained to a later hour than usual at the breakfast-table: lord Annandale and doctor Ellerslie were announced before they had finished explaining the several charades that lay scattered among the fruit and flowers which were so profusely spread around. The doctor exclaimed, with pretended surprise—"Why, good people, what time did you rise this morning? here have I been up almost these three hours—Shame on you! shame on such laziness! I called, intending to take a walk with some of you, and here I find that

you have but just thrown by your night-caps—But, bless me! what have you here? flowers and *billet-doux* for breakfast! rather light food, I should imagine—not such as would suit my stomach this cold morning," added he, jocosely, at the same time very deliberately putting on his spectacles, first very carefully rubbing the glasses to make them perfectly clear; then taking up a charade, he began to con it over with all due solemnity.

Annie whispered her cousin that the doctor reminded her just then of an owl peeping out of an ivy bush.—"That wig! that tremendous wig!" said she, ready to laugh at his grave demeanour, so ill suited to the gallant verses he was studying with profound attention.

He at length replaced the charade on the table, put his spectacles up in their case, and made no other comment on what he had perused, but by an audible humph! very audible indeed to all present, but meant only to himself.

"Well, doctor, and what do you think of these charades?" said Mr. Hamilton.

"Enigmas not worth the solving—dog-grel rhymes, and French flummery all—enough to turn the girls' heads with love and vanity; the cunning gypsies learn fast enough to set a value on their own pretty faces, without having this nonsense whispered in their ears. Burn it all, Hamilton, burn them all, I advise you as a friend," said he, with pretended gravity, while he scrambled up the billets that lay near him, as if he really meant to throw them in the fire.

Annie and Cecilia believing he was going to execute his threat, and unwilling to lose those compositions of flattery and gallantry, now earnestly entreated the seemingly obdurate doctor to spare the charades, while Annandale and Edward, guessing it to be but a joke of their old friend's, enjoyed the lamentations of the ladies, at the same time pretending to join them in petitioning the doctor not to destroy those precious effusions of French

gallantry, which he had so *barbarously* purloined.

"There, you see, Hamilton, what a value they set on those trifles! I told you how it would be," said Ellerslie, while, with a well-affected air of reluctance, he resigned his prey to the fair pleaders.

When he had prevailed on the gentlemen to accompany him in a walk, he took leave of the ladies, who had declined being of the party, as they should be engaged that morning in making preparations for the evening.

CHAPTER VI.

"I SHALL want my harp," said Annie, "and I have told Annandale that he should have my father's flute, which is a most excellent one: I wish, Cecilia, you would walk home with me, to order them and my dress for this evening to be sent

here—I will tell Blanche what to get ready for me, and shall not detain you ten minutes. Do, my dear girl, get on your bonnet, and let us go directly; if you are with me, lady Harriet will not tease me to go with her to the concert at madame le Brun's—I know she will, if I go alone: my father does not wish to control me—he had rather I did as I liked best in this matter; but I know, not why, but lady Harriet and Victoire try all they can to persuade me to be at this party—indeed, they cannot endure I should be away from them one single hour: I do not wish to offend them, but I cannot give up my whole time to them, now you and my uncle are so near."

Cecilia could easily guess the motives of both those ladies; but being now ready to attend her cousin, did not enter them into any explanation as to her own sentiments on that subject. They both took leave of Mrs. Tremayne for the present, assuring her they would not stay longer than was absolutely necessary, as they

should leave her alone during their absence.

"Oh, never mind me—I shall employ myself while you are gone in decorating the room with these beautiful flowers of yours: we shall look quite gay to-night," said she; "and your little elegant basket, Annie, shall be placed on Cecilia's work-table, if she do not object to my displaying your costly present to her saintship."

"It shall be entirely as you please, my dear aunt—it will, I make no doubt, be as much admired by our visitors as it is prized by me."

They had not been long gone, when Morgan brought a parcel to Mrs. Tre-mayne; he said it came from Paris—he had been told so by the porter. As she had not heard that her brother or Edward expected any such parcel, she was not a little surprised, and thinking there might be some mistake, looked at the direction.

"It is for Miss Cecilia, ma'am," said Morgan. "It is very light for so large a parcel," added he, on observing the good

lady look rather perplexed as to what it could probably be, and by whom sent.

"It is for my niece, I see," said she—"it is no mistake I find; leave it here, Morgan—Cecilia will be soon home; I shall not open it till her return."

Annie and her cousin had been detained longer than they expected, by some visitors to lady Harriet, who, in compliment to her, had adopted the English custom of paying *morning* visits. Victoire and her brother endeavoured to prevail on the fair cousins to stay till the evening at colonel Campbell's, entreating them to go to madame le Brun's with themselves and lady Harriet; it would, they said, be the most elegant entertainment that had lately been given at Dinan.

Cecilia politely thanked them, but declined going, as her father had invited a few friends to a private concert that evening.—"Annie has very kindly engaged to favour us with her company," said she.

"I should be quite jealous if Miss Campbell were to devote so much of her

time to any other friend, but I cannot be astonished at her extreme partiality to one so charmingly engaging as her fair cousin, Miss Hamilton."

This remark was made by Victoire to her brother, who gallantly declared it was impossible to decide which of the lovely cousins was most enchanting; he again expressed his regret that he should not meet them at madame le Bruy's concert, and insisted on attending them to Mr. Hamilton's: fortunately for all parties, the gentlemen were not returned. Mrs. Tre-mayne received the count with her usual politeness, and as Edward was not present, she felt no alarm, but did not urge him to lengthen his visit, dreading the return of Hamilton and her son: an interview between Edward and Eugene de Bironville, she ever wished to avoid as much as possible.

The count had but just taken leave, and could not have been far from the house, when the gentlemen returned. Lord Annandale and doctor Ellerslie staid but a

short time, and proceeded towards their hotel. As soon as they were gone, Mrs. Tremayne told her brother of the visit she had received from De Bironville in their absence: she again begged her son to be on his guard, and not urge the vindictive spirit of the count, who, she said, appeared now to wish to conciliate matters; it would be as well not by any means to refer to the past, and as he was disposed to behave with decent respect, it would be wrong to irritate him by rude bluntness, or sarcastic contempt.

Edward continued silent, and it was some time before the united entreaties of his friends could prevail so far as to obtain his consent to be sometimes of the same parties with that object of his detestation, Eugene de Bironville. Annie in vain pleaded in behalf of the young count—she could not convince Edward of the truth of what she herself still implicitly believed, that he had mistaken Eugene for his cousin Camille de Bironville. As she could not by any argument convince him of

what appeared to her so probable, she owned to Cecilia afterwards, that she thought her lover obstinately tenacious of his own opinion. -

"I had nearly forgotten to tell you, Cecilia, here is a parcel for you, my dear—it was brought while you were out," said Mr. Tiemayne; "Morgan says the bearer told him it came from Paris."

"A parcel for me, dear aunt! What can it be?" said Cecilia.

"Do open it—I long to see what it is. How large a parcel! If it were not so light, I should have thought it a young child in a coffin, it is such an unaccountable shape," said Annie, all impatience to open the thick envelope of this unlooked-for present.

"You are really an exceedingly strange girl; but stay, I cannot untie this string; do get my aunt's scissars off her table," said Cecilia, almost as anxious to see the contents of the parcel as her cousin, who exclaimed with rapture—"Oh! what a beauty! what a sweet thing! it is a lyre,

just such a one as I saw at the shop in Paris, where my harp was bought. My dear cousin, do try it—I hope it is a good one; it will be delightful for you to play this evening."

"Have you any idea who sent it?" said Edward, who was a most attentive observer of what was then passing; "here is a billet you let fall—perhaps it is from the donor, whoever that may be," added he, stooping to pick up a paper neatly folded.

This had fallen on the floor quite unperceived either by Annie or Cecilia, so engaged were they both in looking at the unexpected gift. Cecilia took the paper from Edward, and on opening it, found it contained a copy of verses, addressed to herself, in the most elegant style of delicate compliment. Still more astonished, she gave the billet to her aunt and Annie to read; Edward was impatient to read it, and taking the paper from Annie, as she declared they were the prettiest French verses she had ever read, he glanced his

eye hastily over them, when a thought struck him, that he had seen the handwriting somewhere lately, but could not at that moment recollect when or where; the name of Valcrie, which had been partly concealed by a fold in the billet, next engaged his attention, and put his suspicions beyond all doubt.—“ It is from your devoted Valerie,” said Edward to his cousin.

“ From Valerie! no, that is impossible—he is not at Paris, he is at Sedan; it cannot be from him,” replied Cecilia; “ and he could never think of sending me this present, even suppose he were at Paris—I am almost a stranger to him.”

“ But you have forgotten, Cecilia,” said her father, “ the message I gave you from the countess de Bonneval; she expected him in Paris, and I think it not unlikely she may have told him how much you admired his lyre, and perhaps even went so far as to advise him to send you one like it—it is only another proof of his gallantry; she is just the character who would

like it herself, and judges the same of you, my love."

Annie, in the meantime, quite heedless of these debates, was trying the instrument, which she assured them was the sweetest-toned of any she had ever heard.—“ You must positively use it to-night, Cecilia,” said she; “ it seems sent on purpose to be in readiness for our concert—perhaps the very *saint* herself sent it to her favourite votary: my sweet cousin, you cannot presume to refuse the *celestial gift*; if you do, I can only say I shall be tempted to steal it, and thus commit sacrilege.”

“ I think it is indeed from Valerie,” said Mrs. Treinayne. “ I shall begin to give some credit to what madame de Bonneval asserts, that you, Cecilia, have made a conquest you never intended. Poor Valerie!” said she, as if commiserating his luckless fate. “ I really cannot pretend to advise you how to act, for he will be most cruelly hurt if you return his present; and yet——”

Edward interrupting his mother, said with great earnestness—" You will not keep it, I suppose, Cecilia?"

" Most certainly not," she replied, after a moment's deliberation.

Edward made no farther remark, but his fine dark eyes sparkled with delight, at this positive determination of his cousin's.

" Not keep it! how ridiculous! how precise you are, Cecilia! you cannot send it back; you do not know monsieur Valerie's address; you are, I think, too scrupulous; nonsense! nonsense! you must and shall keep it," said she, perceiving her cousin's intention of remonstrating on the impropriety of doing so.

" I shall undoubtedly send it back to madame Bonneval, and beg her to return it to her friend, with my thanks for his politeness, but must beg her to say I decline accepting it, in the manner least painful to his feelings."

" Cecilia, my love," said her father, " you have determined exactly as I could wish, but I was willing to leave the whole

affair to be settled as you thought best, and I am not disappointed in so doing."

Annie no longer dared to urge her cousin on the subject, but reluctantly saw the elegant *lyre d'Apollon* consigned again to its case, and packed up in its former envelopes.

Lady Harriet and her constant companion, mademoiselle de Bironville, called at Mr. Hamilton's early in the afternoon, as they returned from making purchases in the town.—"We could not think of passing your door without calling in to see you and Mrs. Treinayne," said Victoire to Cecilia.

Annie, who could think of nothing but the present to her cousin, again unpacked the lyre, and showing it to the visitors, asked if they had ever seen any thing more elegantly finished?

"It is really beautiful," said her ladyship: "whose is it, my love? is it Miss Hamilton's?"

"It might be," said Annie, "but she will not accept it, because it is the gift of

an unfortunate lover of her's. I am quite vexed with her for persisting in sending it back."

Mr. Hamilton not being then present, she spoke her sentiments more freely than she would otherwise have ventured.

Lady Harriet merely said—"No doubt Miss Hamilton will act with due propriety in this delicate affair, better than either you or I, Annie, could advise her."

Victoire hesitated not to declare it would be the most barbarous thing she could do to send back the lyre—Valerie would be quite *au desespoir*; she would certainly advise her to keep it, especially as she had heard Miss Hamilton speak in raptures of his playing and singing, and this was just such an instrument as he had played at the hotel—her charming friend Cecilia had frequently mentioned it when praising the beautiful voice of monsieur Valerie; and then, as if casually, asked if she had not some of his romances written out by him for her?

"Oh yes, my cousin has several, two in

particular are very pretty; I have copied them into my collection," said Annie.

Cecilia was rather surprised at the manner in which Victoire had described her admiration of Valerie's voice and skill in music; she had certainly expressed herself warmly in his praise to her cousin, but never to mademoiselle de Bironville; to her she had, on the contrary, been particularly guarded in her expressions, dreading her raillery: she now felt particularly chagrined at the remarks of her visitor concerning Valerie; she feared they might again be repeated in the presence of Edward. At this time both he and Mr. Hamilton were gone to the house of a musician, of whom they had hired some musical instruments for their friends expected in the evening, but which had been delayed to be sent as ordered.

After the departure of lady Harriet and her friend, Annie, attended by her maid Blanche, retired to the apartment of her cousin, to perform the duties of the toilet,

in other words, to dress for the evening. In the meantime, Mrs. Tremayne and her niece were carefully replacing the lyre in the case in which it had been sent, and intended to send it the following day on its road to Paris, notwithstanding the extreme wish Cecilia owned she felt to be possessed of an instrument of this description ; had not Valerie been the donor, had madame Bonneval presented it herself, she would gladly have kept it, she told her aunt, as they were arranging the packing of this present, which had caused such debate among them.

Mrs. Tremayne, finding a direction on the inner side of the outer envelope, she examined it, and found it to be sent from the music-warehouse, to madame de Bonneval, at the Hotel de Bonneval : a bill to her from the owner of the shop, containing the charge for the identical lyre they had in their possession, convinced Cecilia and her aunt that the countess was the purchaser of it, and probably had played them the trick of passing it off as a present from

Valerie: the account, with the receipt for payment, they had by chance found among the different bits of paper, stuffed in between the lyre and its case, to prevent the wood and inlaid work from being injured in travelling.—“ You will, of course, my love, give up the idea of sending it away, now you are convinced it is a present from your friend the countess; I see through the whole trick now, and we will find some method of being revenged for this frolic of hers: but say nothing to your father, and play on it this evening to surprise him. We will tell Annie when she comes; she will enjoy the trick with all her heart; she is a dear lover of mirth, and, besides, will be delighted to find you will keep the present after all, as she so much wished you to do.”

“ But the verses are signed in the name of Valerie,” said Cecilia: “ do you think madame de Bonneval would venture so far as to sign his name?” said she, rather doubtfully.

"She would, in my opinion, my dear, say, as it was all *en badinage*, it was perfectly allowable, and would not mind telling Valerie himself the liberty she had taken with his signature," replied her aunt.

Upon comparing the writing with the songs copied by Valerie, the ladies were both convinced they were not written by the same person who wrote the verses, although they were meant to appear in the same handwriting, and had deceived them on a slight view only. Cecilia, quite satisfied on this point, no longer hesitated about keeping her present; Annie, delighted to hear this, did not inquire very particularly into the cause of her cousin's change of mind, provided she was to keep the charming beautiful lyre.

The evening passed away to the delight and satisfaction of the whole party, excepting Edward, who was both surprised and hurt at the strange and fickle conduct of Cecilia, after she had so positively asserted her determination to return Valerie his present. With the impatient and hasty

way of judging by appearances only, without taking time for investigating the real state of the case, which before had so often misled him, he now accused his cousin of silly caprice, and wantonly trifling with his feelings : he did not in words accuse her, but his looks spoke his sentiments equally plain, and betrayed a want of confidence in her which piqued her pride. Conscious as she was that his reproaches were unmerited, and his decision on her conduct hasty and ungenerous, she did not at first perceive the change in his manner. She played and sung uncommonly well, and received the applause of the company ; all but Edward praised her voice, and her light elegant touch of the instrument, on which she appeared to excel ; the lyre itself, the cause of his secret uneasiness, Edward had the mortification to hear universally admired. He endeavoured to rally his spirits, and appear unconcerned, but he was still thoughtful and dejected ; it was the first instance of her having broken her promise—the first proof

he had had that Cecilia was ever guilty of the caprice and folly so commonly attributed to her sex, and which the lords of the creation sometimes flatter themselves *they* are exempt from: how true this idea may be, we will leave to the reader, either male or female, to decide.

At ten o'clock at night, the most enchanting band of music began the serenade; the weather was so remarkably mild for the time of year, that the windows of the apartment were all thrown open, in order that the music might be heard more distinctly; many fine pieces of music were played, with several national airs, among which, *Vive Henri Quatre* was admirably performed.

As Annie and Cecilia stood by the open window, they clearly distinguished the full mellow tones of De Bironville's voice, which rose in melodious harmony above his companion's less powerful notes, which were more blended with the sounds of the various instruments which composed the band. Romances and lighter airs next

succeeded, and the whole was concluded by the favourite English songs, ‘ Rule Britannia,’ and ‘ God save the King,’ which, performed as they both were with great taste, delighted our English party ; the latter grand and national air, played by a full band, rose with all the melodious grandeur of a fine anthem, as it swelled on the ear, or died away in the distance. Mr. Hamilton and the gentlemen with him joined in the chorus with heartfelt sincerity. This was the most flattering compliment that could be paid by the noblesse of Dinan to the English families then resident among them.

When all was again silent, as it was getting late for Annie to be absent from home, she proposed returning ; but as her father’s carriage had not yet been sent for her, as had been promised, and Mrs. Tremayne was unwilling to allow her to walk home, she prevailed on her to wait some time longer ; but Annie, thinking lady Harriet had returned without calling for her, determined to walk, attended by some of

her party.—“ I have, you see, beaux enough to escort me—I shall be well guarded ; lord Annandale, my uncle, and Edward, have all engaged to take care of me ; and no stranger will dare molest me, if doctor Ellerslie will undertake to guard me—they will be so much awe-struck in his presence, that the most hardy will not approach him.”

“ It appears that I cannot impress *you* with awe, you little graceless truant from your father’s house ; here is more fuss about getting you back again, than if you were an Indian princess, and we all your slaves : you were not born in India for nothing, I see—you are fond of a numerous retinue. But here comes our carriage, my lord ; suppose *we* run off with the *heiress of Dunethvin*,” said the doctor ; “ we can do as we please about leaving her at her father’s, or make sure of her as our prize. You may do as you please, but mind, I shall not promise—I will not say I intend to part with her so soon ; I may chance to carry her off to Scotland.”

Lord Annandale declared his readiness to join in the plot; provided he might be allowed to accompany her, he did not care how soon the scheme was put in execution.

Annie being placed under doctor Ellerslie's care, was soon set down at her father's house, and found him at home, but neither lady Harriet or Victoire were yet returned. He told her they both staid so very late, that he left them to the care of the count and his mother; he was quite weary himself, and hoped it would not be long before the party would return.

"My dear father, I can see you are quite fatigued," said Annie, affectionately embracing him; "you have a headache, I know you have," said she, with extreme tenderness of voice and manner: "can I get you any thing to relieve it, dear papa?"

"The sight of you, my darling girl, will do me the most good," said he. "I am rather tired; I have been out too much lately—I am not so well able to bear this constant round of visiting as I once was,

Annie, and the French ladies weary me dreadfully—but I must not say so before madame de Bironville or her daughter. I begin to get heartily sick of it; I wish, with all my soul, I was in London again, and had got rid of them both. Come, my love, sit down by me, and tell me how you have been amused at your uncle's; have you and Cecilia been warbling away again? I had rather have heard you both, than any of the fine, affected, nonsensical misses I have been listening to the last three hours. I really detest the French-women in general; I cannot think how it is lady Harriet likes them so much: you must have observed, it is entirely to please her that I have the Bironvilles with us, for they are no great favourites of mine, and I do not wish you, my dear girl, to take example by Victoire; she may do as a companion, but never adopt her manners, let me beg of you, Annie: as you are now, you are every thing your fond father can wish you to be—I should be grieved indeed to see you like her; her

per* levity is insufferable in my eyes, and I think her a girl of no principles."

This was almost the first caution and only lesson that colonel Campbell had ever given his daughter respecting her conduct; she promised to remember what he had urged, and again perceiving his dejection, expressed her anxiety respecting his health.

"I believe your love is sincere and from the heart, my Annie," said he; "you are now my only real comfort, my child; whilst I see you happy, I cannot be completely miserable," added he, sighing deeply.

The endearing caresses and kind attention of his lovely girl somewhat lessened the emotions of grief and of melancholy reproaches of conscience which for the time preyed on his spirits, exhausted and weary as he then was, by the exertions he had sustained in the attempt to appear gay amongst the gay, when he was, in fact, more disposed for rest and quietness. One cause of his unusual depression was

the fear that he should not be able speedily to get rid of the Bironvilles. The conduct of Victoire had lately so much disgusted him, that he began to see she was a dangerous companion to his own innocent girl: the principles of madame and her son he highly disapproved of, and he had that day urged lady Harriet not to invite them for any length of time, as he wished much to get rid of their company; but she had had the address so to manage him as to induce him to give up the point, and to promise they should remain some time longer in his family: but this promise was most reluctantly given: he began to be aware he was not the master in his own house—not from his being at all deficient in spirit, when roused by contradiction, but lady Harriet had gained such an influence over her infatuated husband, that she could persuade him to what she pleased—she had the entire art of guiding him, even in his most wayward humours.

Unwilling to grieve her, he had often acted against his own judgment, and never

more so than in the present instance; and this was the cause of his present melancholy, which Annie so affectionately strove to dissipate by her more lively manners and topics of conversation. Lady Harriet and her friends did not return till long after she had left her uncle's.

When lord Annandale and the doctor ran off with their fair prize, Cecilia and her aunt were conversing together respecting their intended departure from Dinan, which was to take place the next week. Mr. Hamilton was engaged in reading the *Gazette de France*, and Edward was leaning against the window, apparently lost in a profound reverie, when his senses were recalled to what was passing near him, by the soft notes of music again ascending from the street below, just in front of the house. He gently opened the window, and cautiously looking out, lest he should be observed by the midnight musician, he beheld two figures, very much concealed in the large cloaks they wore, which made it impossible to discover who they were:

one was tall and robust in form; the other, of less stature, had a more youthful appearance than the former, as far as could be guessed without seeing the features of either—for the faces of both were shaded by the darkness of the night, which was but feebly broken by the faint glimmering of a single lamp, that was suspended before a house some distance off. The younger only of these late visitants was serenading them; he played on a lyre, which he accompanied with his voice; he was, at the moment Edward listened, singing the romance of the *Troubadour de Tage*, who immediately knew it to be one of Valerie's.

Could it indeed be his rival? thought Edward: was it Valerie himself then singing? He had, then, again left Paris, and come to seek Cecilia at Dinan.

This supposition appeared more than probable to our anxious hero, whose heart beat with violent emotions of jealous suspicion.

“Did I hear singing?” said Cecilia, starting up, and running towards the win-

dow: "who is it, Edward, do you know?"

"Rather let ~~me~~ ask *you* that question. Listen," said he, "and you may not need any reply as to who is this midnight serenader; you have heard those play who are not so soon forgotten—you have heard the *Troubadour de Tage* before this night, I think, Cecilia."

"Is it not like Valerie's song?" said Mrs. Tremayne, who had now joined them in listening to the stranger.

"My mother has a better memory than you, Cecilia, or you would have me believe so in this instance at least," said Edward, with something of bitterness.

The air changed, and the plaintive sweetness of the voice, as it sung the *Nouvelle Nina*, another of the songs Valerie had copied for her, left Cecilia no longer in doubt. It was then Valerie, thought she, her manner and hesitation betraying her conviction it was that same Valerie she had so often spoken of in terms of the highest admiration; little imagining he was so soon to mar her peace of mind, and

rouse the jealousy of her lover, she listened in breathless agitation till the words, "*Echo, nymphe plaintive,*" again sounded in her ears; and when he concluded the last verse, with "*oh doux espoir!*" in the sweet melody of expression peculiar to Valerie, she could no longer forbear exclaiming—"I am certain it is indeed Valerie—the very romance he wrote for me, he is now singing." Nor was she mistaken; the romance in question was particularly elegant and fanciful in the words, the music singularly wild and plaintive; the subject of the song was an address of a lover to the nymph Echo, who with mournful sympathy repeated his lamentations at the absence of his beloved mistress; he addresses Echo, and concludes by describing his joy at the hope of again meeting the fair object of his love; with this he consoles himself for her present absence, and exclaims with fond delight, "*Oh doux espoir!*" Echo is supposed to murmur back the wish in the lover's own melting tones of love and anx-

iety : the effect of this repetition in singing is beautiful, together with the dying cadence of the voice, in imitation of an echo. Cecilia had played this and several other French romances to her cousin, which made him so soon aware that it was one of Valerie's, when the unknown musician sung the two already mentioned.

The two strangers at length left their station in front of monsieur le Tour's house, slowly walked down the street, and were soon lost to view in the obscurity of the distance, and at that dark hour of the night. Mrs. Tremayne closed the window, and seating herself by the fire, related to her brother the singular circumstance that had attracted their attention, for Mr. Hamilton had been so much engaged in political reflections, that he had not observed what had passed the last quarter of an hour.

Cecilia entered more particularly into a description of the two strangers; for if even their suspicions were just respecting one of them, who could the other be?

and as he did not play, why should he have accompanied Valerie, as there would be no danger incurred in his coming alone?

While this was discussing, Edward continued perfectly silent, and, as it were, abstracted in thought from the company and conversation; and when he took leave of Cecilia, there was a reserve and coldness in his manner towards her which she could not avoid observing. She felt exceedingly hurt at his behaviour; she had noticed before the unusual asperity of his voice and style of language in speaking of Valerie, but did not imagine he would feel such resentment towards herself, without begging an explanation, even of her motive for keeping the lyre, after she had promised to return it. Did he think so meanly of her as to think, for the paltry wish of having such a bauble, she could be induced to forfeit her word with him? or, what was far worse, did he suspect she felt any lurking partiality for Valerie as a lover, when she was already engaged to himself? If Edward could for a moment

maintain such a degrading opinion of her character, in point of sincerity and honour, he was much beneath that high standard of excellence which she had formed in her mind as his real disposition—he had indeed sunk himself in her estimation.

It was thus our heroine reasoned, under the influence of wounded pride; she had the highest notions of honour and integrity, and could not endure the slightest imputation of deceit or artifice: this was ever sufficient to rouse her indignation; it was one of the little failings of her disposition—this kind of pride of not being induced from any motive to depart from the engagement she had made, or promise given to another; a quick susceptibility of feeling made her keenly alive to every reflection on her conduct, or doubt of her sincerity; conscious that she would not willingly wrong another, she expected that confidence in every one towards her, which she was disposed to give to their conduct, till they had *proved* themselves unworthy of it.

When Edward had left them, and Mr. Hamilton chanced to refer to the last serenade the ladies had been entertained with, he declared it to be his belief that they were mistaken in the idea of the person they heard sing being really Valerie—it was more likely one of the young men of their acquaintance in Dinan, who had a mind to outdo the others in gallantry; and as to the songs being the same, that might easily happen, as Valerie had not composed them himself—they were no doubt purchased, and others could in that case get them from Paris, as he had most probably; Valerie, he was convinced, had not yet left Sedan, as he had business there that would detain him some months.

When Edward left them, Mr. Hamilton asked his daughter how it was she had changed her mind respecting the present that young Frenchman had sent her? Mrs. Tremayne took upon herself the explanation required, as Cecilia pleaded weariness, and took leave of them both for the night.

Weary as she undoubtedly was, she did not soon compose her mind so as to allow her to sleep : again and again she revolved in her imagination the events of the past day, and the altered manner of Edward, which caused her much anxious reflection —for if he were of a jealous temper, she should be miserable with him, and to be displeased with her for such a trifle was unkind and ungenerous. Could she help it, if Valeric chose to come and serenade her? As to the lyre, she fully meant that night to have told him why she kept it—he might have been certain she had a proper reason for doing so ; but now, as he was so very suspicious, she would not give him any explanation whatever—she hated a jealous temper, and was resolved to receive him very coldly ; it was now, she thought, her place to shew resentment.

Cecilia cried with vexation, till, completely wearied out by the exertions of the day, and the harassed state of her mind, she fell into a profound sleep, which lasted several hours.

When our heroine awoke, a confused recollection of what had passed the preceding evening crossed her mind—the whole truth gradually broke on her senses: painful as it was to her feelings to acknowledge it, she owned to herself that Edward was not the faultless idol she had fancied him; she considered herself injured by him, and resolved to maintain her resolution of shewing her sense of it, in the visible change in her manner of receiving him.

On this occasion, both Edward and his cousin were to blame; they had both judged too hastily, and felt that foolish pride which led them rather to resent than explain the supposed injury on either side. Their dispositions were each amiable, but neither faultless; they were not exempt from the little foibles and imperfections inherent in human nature, even among the most exemplary characters: the lessons of virtue and religion in their education, aided by the worthy examples of those who instructed them in their duty, had lessened the pride and propensity to

evil, but not wholly eradicated *them*, or the lesser defects of temper; *checked* as the quickness of feeling, so natural to both from their infancy, had been, by the watchful care of Mr. Hamilton and his sister, it was not overcome, and Cecilia and Edward were both liable, from that failing, to be led into error, and in a moment of hasty resentment, to act in direct opposition to what their own judgment would have dictated, had they taken time to reflect: such instances, it must be allowed, were rare with Cecilia; from the excellence of her heart, resentment could not long remain an inmate of her breast.

CHAPTER VII.

IN the morning, Cecilia, not expecting to see her cousin so early, had entered the breakfast-room before she perceived he was already there, and alone; he inquired

after her health, and hoped she had not suffered from the fatigue of yesterday, but in so different a way from his usual tone of kind inquiry, that it was evident he had not forgotten the ill impressions circumstances had given him of her late conduct. She, on her part, affected perfect indifference, and received him with the cold reserve of a slight acquaintance, or one whom she had never seen; and immediately, as if to preclude all further conversation, she took up a book, in which she appeared to be so much engaged, as to forget any one was then in the room with her.

Edward looked at his watch, feared it was slow, and that it would yet be some time before his uncle or mother would make their appearance; still more offended with Cecilia, he was determined she should not perceive his agitation: suddenly snatching up his hat, he left the room, and hastily returned to his own lodgings. There, in an agony of contending passions, he paced his apartment with

hasty steps, till reminded by the chimes that it was past the hour he should have been at his uncle's. Dreading lest he should be questioned, as to the lateness of his appearance, he half resolved to send word he was engaged out, and could not come—But then Cecilia might have told her father that he had been there.

After some deliberation, he thought it best, at all events, to go directly to Mr. Hamilton's: he did so, and Mrs. Tremayne and her brother both rallied him on his late rising; but Cecilia remained silent, which her aunt observing, attributed to indisposition.—“ You are not in spirits, my love,” said she: “ how is this, you are generally so very cheerful, and the life of our whole party? I fear the night air from the window has given you cold; indeed, Cecilia, you look quite pale.”

This remark make Edward look with anxiety at his cousin—she was, he thought, paler; his anger from that moment vanished—he even feared he had been too hasty;

he longed to inquire why she had kept the present from Valerie, which had caused him so much uneasiness; but he still would not lead to an explanation, if she did not of herself wish to give it—no doubt she had some reason for keeping it a secret. Still he most ardently wished to be reconciled, and watched every expression of her interesting countenance, to judge if she were seriously offended at his late resentful and distant manner. He was soon convinced by her treatment of him, that she had noticed his unkind behaviour, and was very greatly displeased with him: whenever he attempted to engage her in conversation, she was distantly polite, but nothing more; her usual vivacity and playful wit, when conversing with him, vanished immediately, and gave place to reserve and chilling apathy of manner, so much so, that her father and aunt observed the change, and concluded she was really ill, and had taken cold the evening of the concert. Perceiving this, and fearing to distress them, she endea-

voured to appear more cheerful—but in vain: her mind was greatly agitated; she feared she had estimated the excellence of her lover's disposition too highly, she felt disappointed and unhappy.

Cecilia proposed to call on Annie, for as she had a slight headache, she could not that morning amuse herself with her drawing or music, and her company might pass the time better than either of those her favourite occupations, as they in general were. Edward, upon hearing this, offered to attend her to colonel Campbell's; but she declined accepting his offer, by saying she expected Victoire and Annie would call on her some time in the morning, and she would then return with them.

Whilst she was waiting in expectation of their visit, she tried to amuse herself by playing over one or two of the songs from Annie's collection, which she had brought from Paris; her aunt had requested to hear them.—“ You will excuse my singing, dear aunt,” said she, pensively; “ I

have really no voice this morning. I fear I shall not be able to perform my promise of playing either, although I have this excellent instrument; but my hand trembles exceedingly—I cannot manage even one of these easy ballads; I must indeed put it away till to-morrow, I hope I shall be better then; but as I do not mean to return the lyre, I can practise on it at my leisure."

She put away the music-book and instrument, and taking up a book of French poetry which she found on the table, continued to read till Edward went out to pay a visit to Annandale.

Annie and mademoiselle de Bironville prevailed on Cecilia to go with them to madame le Blanc's, the mother of the young monsieur le Blanc she had seen frequently at colonel Campbell's. The old lady insisting upon their spending the day with her, as she was left nearly alone by the absence of her married daughter, who commonly resided with her, it was a good opportunity for Cecilia to avoid the society of Edward, which, under their pre-

sent circumstances, was not in her eyes so desirable as formerly ; she willingly yielded to madame's entreaties, who assured her young visitors it would be really a charity to stay, and she would take upon herself to dispatch a messenger to their friends, to let them know they were not to be expected home till night.

Had our heroine been as contented in mind as usual, she would have enjoyed the very agreeable society of madame le Blanc and her son : the former having in her youth been much among the circles of high rank at Paris, amused them with many anecdotes of the then leading families of the nobility who composed the court of the unfortunate Louis ; they, with him, at a later period, had many fallen a sacrifice to the ferocity and brutality of the disaffected multitude.

Monsieur le Blanc, unlike most Frenchmen, was elegant but not fantastical, attentive but not presuming ; he had sufficient of his national character to make him a lively and entertaining companion,

with enough of English steadiness of character to constitute a rational friend. In such company as his and his mother's, it was impossible not to find the time pass agreeably, and Cecilia even shared the influence of their powers of pleasing; she felt highly gratified with her visit, although she was incapable of enjoying the pleasure of it as at any other time. At an early hour, accompanied by her cousin and her friend, she returned home, where Annie, taking leave of her, insisted on engaging her cousin to a party she intended giving the next day.—“There will be a delightful little dance at night; you must come—do come, my dear girl; dancing, you know, is a sovereign remedy with me for a cold, and your headache arises from one, no doubt; it was very late before our gallant cavaliers had concluded their serenade.”

Cecilia reluctantly consented; she feared an entire refusal would disappoint her cousin, or she would very gladly have excused herself altogether; as it was on the

condition that she should be allowed to return home early, she complied with Annie's pressing invitation.

"What! running away from us again to-morrow, Cecilia!" said her father; "you are becoming quite dissipated, child; I had almost a mind to refuse your going, for I fear such a constant round of visiting is too much for your health: you look quite tired out to-night, my dear girl; I should be unwilling to disappoint your cousin, but if you are not better in the morning, I shall not trust you out again with her." Addressing his nephew, he continued— "I shall leave Cecilia to your care, Edward, should she be of this party, for I do not intend to go myself; you must not allow her to dance too much, remember."

"If my cousin will consent to accept me as her guardian, she will not find me unmindful of her real happiness, though others may be more profuse in their compliments and flattering attentions." He paused, for his uncle looked uncertain if he had rightly understood him. "But

perhaps," continued he, "Cecilia may not be inclined to accept me as her guardian; she may not approve of being under my guidance, or may think me too *severe*, if I attempt to control her as you wish, my dear sir."

This was spoken in such a hesitating tone of voice, and so uncommonly strange a manner, totally different from Edward's usual mode of replying to any request where Cecilia was concerned, that his uncle knew not what to imagine the cause of such sudden alteration; he felt half-offended with his nephew's implied doubt of the tractability of his daughter.—"Cecilia will very readily be guided by you, when *I* place her under your care; besides, why should you doubt *your* influence with her? Do you think she is so passionately fond of dancing as not to listen to your remonstrances? I think, if I were Cecilia, I should be disposed to refuse you altogether, as having so bad an opinion of me."

Edward made no reply to this remark

but by a faint smile, wishing to pass it off as well as he could, without alluding to the real cause of his diffidence of his own influence in this affair; he attempted to appear cheerful, that his uncle might not suspect the coolness between him and his cousin.

Mrs. Tremayne advising her niece to retire early to rest, and take every precaution to get rid of her cold, Cecilia gladly availed herself of the opportunity of retiring to the solitude of her own chamber. She had that night parted with Edward with more kindness, but still continued, in some degree, the reserve she had lately assumed since their misunderstanding; she was conscious he was unhappy—he appeared melancholy, and extremely anxious respecting her health; but he alluded not to the cause of their disagreement, and would not ask the explanation she knew he wished. She could not make the first advances towards a reconciliation; he had been the first aggressor—he had, she

she thought, unjustly condemned her conduct, before she could possibly explain it to him: but she resolved, at all events, to confine her sorrows to her own bosom, and not mention the cause of her disquietude to her father or aunt; she was aware what grief it would occasion the mother of Edward, to hear of their mutual displeasure.

Cecilia did not leave her apartment till assured the whole family were assembled; she was unwilling to meet her lover again as she had the morning before; the embarrassment of such a *tête-à-tête* she now hoped to avoid. She descended to the breakfast-room with an appearance of better health and spirits than the preceding night, so much so, that her father, embracing her with his usual tenderness, said—"I believe, Cecilia, I must part with you again this evening—you seem so much better, that Annie will, I am certain, take no excuse; your aunt and I must amuse ourselves as well as we can in your absence, my love—but when do you expect your cousin to call for you?"

" She said she should wish me to come in the morning for a few hours to look over some new dresses she has received from Paris; I am told they are so beautiful that she and Victoire are quite delighted with them ; they say it will amuse me, perhaps, to look them over, as I am not much fit for application to my usual employments of the morning. I have no great wish to see the Parisian fashions, but I must go, or it may appear unkind and rude to my cousin."

" Did I not place entire confidence in you, my dear Cecilia," said Mr. Hamilton, " I should fear you might derive a taste for display and extravagance from lady Harriet and her young companions; their examples are certainly dangerous to an unthinking giddy girl like Annie; she has already imbibed many of their ideas, and sets too high a value on dress and fashion. Her father, I am sorry to see, does not check this growing evil, this propensity to expense and show, either in his wife or daughter; but I trust, my dear girl, you

will never have the foolish vanity of wishing to outvie your acquaintance in dress and ornaments, even should you ever have it in your power to gratify that poor ambition of a weak mind."

"Cecilia, I must say, has great merit in resisting every temptation of this kind as she does," said her aunt; "for I have known her refuse many magnificent presents which the generosity of Annie led her to offer, and frequently has she checked that giddy girl in her own idle expences."

"My dear aunt, you think, because you have so good an opinion of my prudence, that every one must judge as partially of me; but no doubt I come in for my share of censure—all your kindness will not screen me from the cruel animadversions of those who judge too *hastily*, and from *appearances*; perhaps some such may be found even among my *dearest friends*."

Edward felt this was meant as a reproof for his own hasty and resentful manner the preceding evening; he was conscious it was not more than he deserved, for his

having been induced to act upon appearances only : yet she had broken her promise, and had, engaged as she was to him, condescended to accept of a present from an avowed admirer. Surely, thought he, this was not acting with that delicacy and refinement of feeling which he had expected from her he loved.

As he was thus debating with himself, Annie and mademoiselle de Bironville called for Cecilia. When they were gone, Edward was considering if he had not better ask his mother to explain the seeming mystery that had so perplexed and chagrined him ; but unfortunately, just then, his uncle came to beg he would accompany him on a visit to monsieur le Blanc, and some other gentlemen he had been introduced to by the count de Bonneval ; he wished to inform them of his intended departure from Dinan on the following week. They called at colonel Campbell's during the morning, and spent some time with him and his family. Cecilia was there, with her cousin and Vic-

toire, who, as usual, endeavoured by every art to attract the particular attentions of Edward, who, unhappily for himself, then adopted a resolution most dangerous in the practice, although frequently resorted to by those lovers doubtful of the strength and fidelity of each other's affections—he resolved to prove the love of his cousin, or if she already repented of her engagement to him, and in reality regretted the absence of Valerie ; stung to the heart by her cold disdain, he became exceeding attentive to Victoire, hoping to excite the jealousy of Cecilia. By this ill-judged conduct, he saw not the danger he was incurring of losing her for ever whom he loved beyond every other human being.

Mademoiselle de Bironville, exulting in the pleasure he appeared to take in her company, and delighted with his attentions, was most engaging, and studied, by every means in her power, to please and flatter him, by the most insinuating and winning manners ; she lavished her caresses on Cecilia, while she secretly tri-

implied in the success of her own deep-laid machinations. Ever quick-sighted in affairs of love, she soon perceived the coolness that subsisted between the lovers; this she hoped soon to turn to her own advantage.

Cecilia, in the meantime, engaged herself in an earnest conversation with Annie, or chatted with monsieur le Blanc and his sister, purposely because she would not seem to observe the conduct of Edward and Victoire.

When Mr. Hamilton rose to take leave of colonel Campbell, he said to Cecilia—“ You remember your promise of returning home this morning; you must reserve yourself for the evening, and not fatigue your spirits too much now; are you disposed, my love, to accompany us immediately? Your aunt and I shall have to nurse you, if we do not take care of you in time, I see that; so you had better take my advice and come home.”

Annie reluctantly parted with her cousin, but agreed with lady Harriet, that no

selfish motive should induce her to detain Cecilia, much as she desired her company.

Cecilia, accompanied by Edward, joined the party at an early hour in the evening, who again gave up his whole attention to Victoire, not unperceived, though apparently unnoticed, by his cousin.

Eugene de Bironville, who had been very respectful and agreeable in the morning, now again endeavoured to ingratiate himself in the favour of Edward : his former haughty expression of countenance was softened into the smile of friendly courtesy. He participated secretly in the exultation of his sister, who, he flattered himself, had succeeded in attracting the admiration of his enemy, whom he hoped to mortify and triumph over ; at least, should he not be able to effect this to the full extent he imagined probable, still the partiality of Edward for Victoire would induce him to pass over his knowledge of her brother's villainy.

In this hope he was likely to be disappointed. Edward was neither partial to his

sister, or disposed to make him his friend; he despised the count as much as ever, in his heart, but had imposed on himself the irksome task of behaving courteously to him in company.

Cecilia had danced good part of the evening without being particularly weary. When the waltzing began, le Blanc engaged her to try for a short time; the exercise, he said, would not be too much for her. He entreated she would allow him to lead her to the group of dancers, who were just going to begin the figure,

In reply to this, she pleaded being so little used to waltzing, that she should never be able to continue the figure, weary as she then was.

Edward, with whom she had danced one dance in the commencement of the evening, now approached her, as if anxious to hear her determination: mademoiselle de Bironville was with him.—“Come, I am ready to join the waltzers,” said she, taking his arm, and with an easy *non-cha-*

lance of manner, led him off to the set who were next to begin. Our hero was not a little surprised at this specimen of the effrontery of his Parisian belle, for, in fact, he had never offered himself as her partner; he disliked waltzing, but he now saw no means of avoiding it, and thus suffered himself to be the dupe of Victoire, who hoped much from this manœuvre of hers towards forwarding her schemes. Cecilia would, no doubt, believe Edward had previously engaged her, and that she only reminded him then that the dance was beginning. This plan succeeded to her most sanguine wishes, and as she passed her fair rival, Victoire glanced a look of proud disdain, her eyes sparkling with malicious triumph. Cecilia saw her insulting manner, and resolving not to appear hurt at it, and to be revenged on Edward, she instantly accepted the proffered hand of le Blanc, and entered the set near to her lover and Victoire, and continued to waltz for some time.

Edward, though he affected to be whol-

ly engaged with the dance, still could not forbear casting many an anxious glance towards the fair partner of Le Blanc; his heart torn with the agony of contending love and anger, he was scarcely conscious what he did or said, and, as it were, mechanically followed the figure to the music. His mind was at the time wholly engrossed by Cecilia, who knew that he disapproved of waltzing, and that her father had the same opinion as himself on that subject; yet she had accepted le Blanc, though nearly a stranger, to waltz with as her partner: true, he believed the young man amiable and deserving of his good opinion, as far as he could judge from their short acquaintance, but to see him support the lovely form of Cecilia through the mazes of the dance, filled the soul of Edward with indignation and rage scarcely to be controlled—he felt at that instant ready to snatch her from his arms, and challenge him on the very spot, for presuming to clasp her slender waist with his unhallowed hands, and thus to bear her

through the whirling throng, even in the presence of one to whom she was betrothed.

Cecilia suddenly became faint; the continual evolution of the figure had made her head turn giddy—the surrounding objects swam before her eyes—a deathlike paleness overspread her cheek, and she was just entreating le Blanc to lead her to a seat, when Edward beheld her altered looks; she fell senseless the moment after in the arms of her terrified partner.

Forgetting all resentment, unmindful of all around him but Cecilia, Edward flew towards Le Blanc, caught his beloved cousin from his support, and bore her away from the crowd into an outer saloon; here, assisted by Le Blanc, he endeavoured to recover her from her fainting fit. Annie and lady Harriet, who had by this time heard the cause of the confusion, hastening to Cecilia, found her yet senseless, supported by Edward and Le Blanc's sister, who had followed them out of the dancing-room, Annie blamed herself as being

partly the cause of her cousin's illness, from having continually urged her to dance. By the kind assiduity of lady Harriet, Cecilia was at length recovered, and returned with her to the rest of the company. The short time she remained there, Edward did not again leave her; he behaved with the greatest tenderness, and reminded her that her father having placed her in his care, he had better request lady Harriet would allow them to return home.

—“ Only I fear,” said he, smiling, “ that I shall be severely reprimanded for not preventing your dancing so much; but I feared it would be perhaps deemed an impertinent interference on my part, had I given my opinion. I must own I was not a little astonished to see you *waltzing*,” said he, with some emphasis.

Cecilia made no reply to this last remark, but expressed her wish to take leave of her cousin and lady Harriet; but they would not hear of her returning that night —ill as she had been, the night-air would increase her cold. Cecilia was obliged to

comply with their request of continuing there till the next day.

Edward was exceedingly disconcerted by this arrangement, and found himself under the necessity of returning to his uncle's unaccompanied by Cecilia, which he knew would make him very uneasy respecting the state of his daughter's health. Both Mr. Hamilton and Mrs. Tremayne were extremely anxious to see Cecilia, and would have preferred having her home that night to her remaining at colonel Campbell's, her own home being more quiet, and better calculated to her present state of health than where she was. Edward assured them her illness was by no means alarming; the heat of the room had overcome her; she would, he trusted, be quite herself again in the morning. Comforted with these assurances, the father and aunt of Cecilia retired to rest, something relieved of the anxiety they had felt when first informed of her late indisposition, but still impatient for the

morning, when she would be again with them.

Cecilia, when she rose in the morning, found herself much better in health, but the deadly sickness of the heart still prevailed; vexation such as hers could not entirely be concealed. Annie, with every little attention affection could dictate, sought to divert her cousin's melancholy, which she attributed solely to the languor of indisposition.—“Come with me, Cecilia, into Victoire’s dressing-room,” said she; “I know she will succeed in amusing you, for she has such a collection of droll anecdotes to relate, that the most serious cannot hear her without laughing, she is so witty, and indeed a most charming companion; her conversation will do you good, I am sure it will.”

Annie had not the most distant idea that any thing had occurred to make the society of Victoire less desirable than usual to her cousin. But Cecilia had not forgotten the look, the taunting and insulting look that mademoiselle de Bironville

had given her, when she led off Edward in such a triumphant way; but she thought it best not to refuse Annie's request, and accordingly attended her to the elegant little dressing-room which had been fitted up purposely for Victoire, by her friend lady Harriet.

Mademoiselle de Bironville was writing, but on perceiving her visitors, exclaimed, as she advanced to receive them—" Oh, my charming friends, this is kind indeed of you! I am delighted to see you; I was just trying to drive away ennui by employing myself in writing to my jeweller, and packing up some of my trinkets, to have them sent to Paris to be new set, as I shall want them on my return; you may have something too, Annie; I think you said the other day you had some pearls to be strung—do have that old broach of your mother's modernized; the pearls themselves are fine, but want to be set in a more modern fashion."

" Not for the world would I have it altered; that broach which you so much

despise, I value beyond every other trinket I possess : it was my poor mother's, and contains a lock of my aunt's hair, which she gave her to be set in it, on their first being separated from each other, by my mother's marriage. I have two most important reasons, you find, for persisting in this whim, as you and lady Harriet have termed my resolution not to have it altered : but I have some other trifle I will trouble you to send for me, if you please."

This was said in a tone that convinced Victoire she had rather displeased Annie by the contemptuous manner in which she had spoken of her mother's highly-valued trinket : she knew how to change the subject of conversation to her own advantage, and banished every feeling of resentment in the mind of Annie, by her apparent interest in the amusing and paying court to her cousin. Annie beheld, with pleasure, the great attention she bestowed on Cecilia ; and, when Victoire chose, she had certainly the art of pleasing more than

most people, even in her superior rank in society. Cecilia could not but admire the elegance of wit and versatility of talent which she possessed; she could not be astonished at the influence she had obtained over Annie, who looked not beyond present appearances, and imagined every one amiable that feigned to be so.

Cecilia was listening to an interesting narrative of some family mademoiselle de Bironville had known, when her cousin was called out of the room, to go immediately to lady Harriet, who wished to consult her opinion on a subject very trivial in itself, but which made her presence indispensable, before her ladyship could decide about it. Promising to be back almost directly, Annie left her cousin and Victoire to amuse each other, as she told them, till her return. The latter continued packing her trinkets, and arranging those different ornaments she did not mean to part with: among the latter, a small case was placed—Cecilia observed it, and thought it looked like one de-

signed to contain a miniature, but was too diffident to attempt looking at it nearer. Victoire had shewn her several of her other valuables, and, taking up this, seemed half inclined to let her see that likewise, but, hesitating, looked at the picture it contained for some minutes, quite near enough for her companion, had she been so inclined, to have an imperfect view of the features; but, as she appeared not to wish a nearer scrutiny, Cecilia did not attempt to look that way.

After gazing at it again and again, with a pensive sigh Victoire laid the case on the table before her, among some of her ornaments, and went out of the room to get some cotton to pack the jewels in she meant to send to Paris; she apologized to Cecilia for leaving her, but promised to be with her again in a few minutes, after she had asked lady Harriet for the things she had to send for her ladyship in her packet.

A strange idea at this moment took pos-

session of our heroine's imagination as she looked at the case Victoire had placed on the table ; she fancied she had seen it in her aunt's little India cabinet, in which she kept her trinkets and presents she had received, when young, of different little valuables. Upon examining this case more attentively, Cecilia still thought it looked like one that held a miniature of Edward, taken just before he left England, to embark for Spain. She knew—she thought it could not be the same, yet she wished to persuade herself; and the similitude in the outer cover had nothing extraordinary in it: might not fifty others resemble it in that particular? Still as madeleine de Bironville was much longer gone than she had intended, Cecilia could not resist the temptation of satisfying herself it was *not* the miniature she had seen in her aunt's cabinet; she felt an almost irresistible wish to look at it. She took it up; her hand trembled as she pressed the spring; the case, true to the pressure, opened with the slightest touch—but what

words can express the astonishment, the heart-rending anguish of Cecilia, when she beheld the likeness of Edward himself—of him whom she had fondly called *her* Edward, and had considered as her future husband! The miniature was, beyond all doubt, the same her aunt once had : Edward must have gained possession of it, and given it to the artful Victoire, who had purposely thrown it in her way, as a means of mortifying her, and exulting in the share she had in the affections of Edward.

As these thoughts passed in the mind of Cecilia, a dimness spread itself before her eyes; she trembled almost convulsively, and nearly let the miniature fall as she attempted to replace it. “Alas!” sighed she, “his altered manner is now clearly accounted for;” he really preferred Victoire to her whom he had so meanly deceived. Was it possible he had so soon repented of his engagement? Could he be so fickle, so inconstant to his former vows of eternal love and fidelity? “And

I am resigned for such a woman as mademoiselle de Bironville!" thought she, clasping her hands in the bitter anguish of her feelings. The idea was too humiliating—distraction was in the thought ; he could not be so base, so ungenerous ! And yet the picture was his.

Scarcely knowing how to act under this dreadful trial of her fortitude, she earnestly endeavoured to summon all her strength of mind, and, if possible, appear calm when Victoire returned ; but it was with great difficulty she could so far compose her agitated feelings as to hope to escape the observation of her rival, who would now triumph more than ever in the hope of having caused her anxiety.

" Ah, my dear friend," said she to Celia, as she entered the room, " I have left you a long time, but I hope you will pardon my rudeness—I was detained so long by lady Harriet. I must now put these things away till another day.—Oh dear !" said she, with pretended dismay, " how came I to leave this miniature here ? I must mind

I do not put it up by mistake among the things I am to send to Paris ; I would not part with it for all the world—dear image of one who is dearer to me than life itself.” She then sighed deeply, and locked the small cabinet, in which she placed the picture, with the other valuables. “ Shall we now go in search of Annie? I left her in deep consultation with lady Harriet; but, though I am not in the secret, I guess the subject is of no great importance. I see you are weary of being here, *ma belle amie*, and her ladyship wishes to see you, and inquire how you are after your late indisposition.”

Cecilia made but little reply to this speech of her deceitful companion, and followed her into the drawing-room, where she found lady Harriet. Colonel Campbell, with Annie and Eugene de Bironville, entered almost immediately after them. They all inquired, with friendly solicitude, after her health : she assured them she was much better, but Annie perceived with anxiety the increased pale-

ness of her cousin, and the languid expression of her countenance ; she feared Cecilia was much worse than she was willing to own ; she appeared better when she first rose in the morning, but had changed alarmingly the last half hour. Annie did not mention this, lest it should add to her cousin's agitation of spirits, which was but too visible to the attentive observer.

Mr. Hamilton and Edward came in soon after, and the flush that, at sight of the latter, spread itself over the pallid cheek of Cecilia, prevented her father from observing how ill she then was. He told her he was come to take her home ; that it would be a long time before she must expect to leave them again, for her aunt had given it as her opinion that so much visiting would seriously injure her health. He thanked lady Harriet for her kindness and care of his daughter, but declined staying any time, as Mrs. Tremayne was alone, and exceedingly anxious about her niece.

Edward, ignorant of the new cause of

resentment which had irritated his cousin against him, and sunk him so much in her estimation, endeavoured to draw her into conversation; but the effort was fruitless, and he saw with grief that she was more distant in her manner, avoiding, as much as possible, even addressing one word to him. Cecilia had, indeed, turned from Edward with disgust and contempt at his supposed duplicity, as the recollection of the miniature crossed her mind.

Mrs. Tremayne received her with all a mother's fond anxiety. Quite overcome by her efforts to conceal her grief and disappointment, Cecilia wept on the bosom of her aunt, in the bitter anguish of her heart, unable any longer to contend with her agitated feelings.

Mrs. Tremayne saw, by the agitation of her niece, that something had happened to grieve her; but, as Cecilia appeared unwilling to disclose the cause, she would not increase her present suffering by questioning her on that subject.

"After this last proof of Cecilia's obdurate resentment," said Edward, as he paced the apartment in hasty and unsteady steps, "I cannot hope forgiveness. Fool that I was to act as I did! I have wronged her by my suspicions, and she feels the injustice and cruelty of my conduct too keenly to pardon my mad folly. I have lost myself for ever in her esteem."

Such were the reflections of Edward, when left to himself by the absence of his mother and Cecilia, Mrs. Tremayne having prevailed on her niece to try and take some rest, as she might then be able to join the little family-party at the dinner-table, and, by the time her father returned, convince him, by her appearance, that she was not so ill as he feared, and she was unwilling to allow to be the case.

Cecilia had taken her aunt's advice, and, after some time, fallen into a broken and uneasy slumber. Mrs. Tremayne sat by her bedside in silent anxiety; she dreaded lest the perturbed state of her niece's feelings should impair her naturally-delicate

health. Under this idea, she considered it her duty to mention her fears to Mr. Hamilton, and hoped he would prevail on Cecilia to reveal the secret cause of her recent agitation and present indisposition.

It was while she was in her niece's apartment, tenderly watching over her with maternal solicitude, that Edward, forsaken, as he imagined, by her he adored, reproached himself as the cause of the misery he deplored. He could not meet Cecilia again, unless he determined to entreat an explanation—her forgiveness he dared not ask; her steady resentment and cold repulsive manner too surely proved that he had lost himself for ever in her estimation. The idea of giving up the hope of a reconciliation was too painful to think on for an instant; he would, he said, implore her forgiveness, in terms of the sincerest repentance, would she but explain the motives of her accepting the present sent her by Valerie: at all events, his next interview with Cecilia should deter-

mine his future fate—the suspense he now endured was intolerable.

He hurried from the house, and proceeded along the grand promenade, at first intending to make known his disagreement with Cecilia to her cousin or Annandale, and beseech them to interest themselves in his behalf, as he was so soon to be separated from her who alone could ever make him happy. But his pride forbade such a humiliation as this would be; he could not endure the thoughts of being obliged to seek another's assistance in an affair of so much delicacy—nor would Cecilia approve of such a measure: if he could not obtain a reconciliation by his own influence in her heart, he would not owe it to the interference of any friend, however dear.

CHAPTER VIII.
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UPON Edward's return to his uncle's lodgings, he heard that Mr. Hamilton was not yet come home; he had the satisfaction to find Cecilia considerably better, and engaged with her aunt in reading some very entertaining French books, which Monsieur le Tour had lent them.

"I am glad you are come," said Mrs. Tremayne to her son, as he entered the room; "you can now stay with your cousin while I go into the town with madame le Tour to make some purchases; I did not like to leave her entirely alone, and she had better stay at home the whole of this day, at least."

"Dear aunt, I had rather accompany you; indeed I am much better—I am quite well enough to take so short a walk

—it cannot hurt me,” said Cecilia, with great earnestness.

“ My dear child, I shall not believe you are quite well till I see you *looking* better, as well as *saying* you are so, nor will I consent to your going with me: the standing about in the open shops would be the worst thing you could do towards getting rid of your present severe cold; I know not what your father would say to me—he would be displeased with us both.”

Cecilia said no more, but was really distressed at the thought of being left with Edward: should he attempt to converse with her, she might betray her knowledge of the gift he had bestowed on Victoire, and on no account would she have him imagine that her ill health was occasioned by fretting at his change of conduct.

Mrs. Tremayne having promised to be with them again in less than an hour, she left them together, little imagining that she was so much the means of embarrassing the two lovers, by leaving them to this so-much-dreaded *tête-à-tête*.

Cecilia had, not long before Edward came back, employed herself in sorting out some pieces of music, some of which she intended to give to Annie, and others to Emily Carisford; the lyre that Valerie had sent lay on the table near them: as soon as her aunt was gone she resumed her employment.

Edward took up one of the songs that lay near him; it was one of the Spanish ballads he had given her.—“These are quite out of favour now, Cecilia, like their donor, I fear,” said he, looking mournfully at her.

There was a desponding softness in his voice and manner at that instant that spoke to the heart of Cecilia; she felt that she could then have been reconciled to him, were it not for the miniature; but that was so strange a circumstance! so strange that Victoire should have it! she could not overlook that.—“No,” said she, in reply to his observation, “the songs are still as much in favour as ever—*they* are *unchanged*, and are what *they* appeared to

be at first, when they excited my admiration."

Edward looked embarrassed.—“ Could you read the heart of the donor, perhaps you would then be convinced that *that* too is unchanged; but it is vain to plead when the judge has already declared in favour of the adversary,” said he, with energy.

Something of wounded pride was evident in his manner, for he at that moment thought of Valerie.

Cecilia was silent—a tear trembled in her eye—it fell on the song she was then reading, or appeared to be, to conceal her extreme agitation—it happened to be one of Valerie’s.

“ Happy Valerie!” said Edward, “ could you be sensible how you are lamented, how would that tear be prized!” added he, taking up the song, as Cecilia laid it among the confused heap of music papers that strewed the table.

“ I will thank you to give me that romance, Edward,” said she; “ I want it to pack with the rest, and get them ready to be sent this evening to St. Maloe, or they

will not be in time for the Guernsey vessel that is expected to sail."

"St. Maloe!" repeated Edward, with astonishment; "what can you mean?"

"I mean to send them to Emily—she will be pleased with them, and *I* have no wish to keep them."

"Not keep them! why, I thought you meant to play them on Valerie's lyre?"

"Madame de Bonneval's lyre, I suppose you mean? for Valerie has sent me none," said Cecilia, blushing deeply as the scrutinizing glance of Edward's eyes met hers the instant she had uttered these words.

. "Not Valerie's lyre! How then came his name to the verses addressed to you?"

"My aunt will tell you the particulars, if you wish to hear them; excuse me just now—I am very busy, and in haste to get this parcel ready. It can be but of little consequence to you now, Edward: had it happened a short time since, it might have interested you as well as me."

"Cecilia, for the love of Heaven, hear me! I conjure you, by all that is sacred,

hear me but this once! Dear as you are to me, nothing that concerns you can be uninteresting to me; you have relieved my mind of a load of doubt and care. I have, I own, wronged you by my unjust suspicions; but, dearest Cecilia, say you will this once forgive me; pronounce my pardon, and I shall be the happiest of men!"

" My opinion of your conduct cannot influence your happiness—my forgiveness you have, if that is of any consequence now; but do not mock and insult me by professions of regard; I know all—nothing is now hid from me; but why you should seek to mislead me by pretended love, when your heart is devoted to another, I cannot imagine; but I would not have my father know your duplicity."

" Cecilia, my adored Cecilia, drive me not to distraction!" said Edward, wildly interrupting her. " What demon of malice has so basely represented me to you as the villain you suppose me to be? I swear I never have deceived you—I never

loved another. Could you for a moment think I preferred that poor contemptible flutterer, Victoire de Bironville, to you—to you, whom I have considered the most perfect of human beings? Oh no, Cecilia! in a moment of hasty resentment I trifled with her in all the shew of gaiety, while my heart was a prey to the keenest anguish of jealousy and despair."

"Edward, I might believe your innocence, had I not other proofs than mere compliments and smiles; but that you should have given her your picture, is in itself conviction sure."

"It is a falsehood, black as her own guilty soul. I swear I never gave the least present to that accursed woman, much less should I have given her my miniature. Who has dared to assert this to you? was it Victoire herself?"

"I saw the picture in her possession, and I had it in my own hands; I am certain it is the very same your mother had," said Cecilia, trembling with terror at the wild and agitated expressions of Edward.

“ Then that diabolical woman has stolen it to effect her purposes; she wished to separate us for ever, and that picture would, she thought, assist in her deep-laid machinations; but I protest—most solemnly protest, that I knew not it was in her possession. Cecilia, can you now doubt me? If my mother were here, I would appeal to her: I have never had the miniature from her, and I thought she still had it, with that of my father.”

Cecilia could no longer doubt his sincerity; she accepted his submission, and promised to forgive all that passed; she owned she had herself been to blame in not coming sooner to an explanation respecting the unfortunate present from madame de Bonneval, who little imagined the grief she had caused her young friend by her frolic.

“ Do you think that was really Valerie that serenaded you the other night?” said Edward; “ it is not that I now fear him, but I should like to know the truth.”

“ I have lately had my suspicions,” said

Cecilia, " that it was not him ; the figure of the elder stranger was so like that of Eugene, as I saw him last night when he came home, wrapped up in his large cloak, and had been to attend some of the ladies home after the ball."

" I should not be surprised if this too were a contrivance of those detested Bironvilles. I remember now, my uncle did say he was certain it could not be Valerie, for he must yet be at Sedan ; but even you, Cecilia, were deceived in the voice—you believed it to be his. Whoever it may be, I most sincerely wish they would come again ; I would take care to find out who they were—I would unmask the impostors, for such I now believe them to be, and that, in some way, Eugene and his sister are in the plot—the elder was perhaps Eugene himself. But I hear my mother's voice, speaking to madame le Tour : we will now ask her concerning the miniature, if she still have it, or has lately lost it—I am impatient to hear her account of it."

Mrs. Tremayne just then appeared, and

asked Cecilia if any one had called in her absence?—"I expected mademoiselle de Bienville would have been here; I gave her something to send for me to her jeweller's at Paris, but as we go so soon ourselves, I shall not trouble her; I told her so yesterday, and Edward will be going to England in a few days."

"Then the mystery of the miniature being in her possession is now explained, Cecilia. Did you not, my dear mother, give one to Victoire to send to Paris?"

"How came you to think I had?" said his mother; "I never told either of you I had: why do you think I have?"

"But you have, my dear aunt, and I saw it this morning among her trinkets, and she gave me to understand it was a gift from Edward—at least that he was her lover."

"Impossible, Cecilia! you must surely be jesting! she could not have the cruelty, the meanness, to assert such a daring falsehood. I gave it her to send to Paris to be copied for me, that I might present you

this very miniature in question, considering you as the future wife of Edward. Victoire assured me I could have it admirably done by an artist she knew in Paris, and offered to send it for me, safely packed with her trinkets: as I wished to surprise you, my love, I said nothing of my intention to you till now."

"And now then I am fully pardoned, am I not, Cecilia?" said Edward. "I was not so very worthless as you were led to believe by the arts of that vile French-woman. Will you now forgive me from your heart?" added he, gazing anxiously in her countenance.

Giving him her hand, she declared she no longer doubted his truth and fidelity.

Mrs. Tremayne understood by these words that there had been a misunderstanding between her son and niece; she begged them to tell her the cause, and afterwards blamed them both for not having referred their mutual grievances to her, who could so easily have explained them away, at least in part. She gave it as her

firm belief that the supposed Valerie and his companion were Victoire and Eugene — “ If she could act as she had respecting the picture, she is capable of any malicious design ; and the character of her brother is too well known by us to admit of a doubt of his having no scruples to join in her plans, if they favoured his own views in any way.”

Annandale, with the doctor and Mr. Hamilton, who came to inquire after Cecilia, now entering, the conversation became more general, and nothing was said to the father of Cecilia respecting the discovery that had been made of the plans of mademoiselle de Bironville against his daughter and nephew till the other two gentlemen had left them : Mrs. Tremayne then related the whole to her brother.

END OF VOL. III.









